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# AIR WAR COLLEGE

## RESEARCH REPORT

EXPANDING ROLE OF THE AIR FORCE SQUADRON COMMANDER

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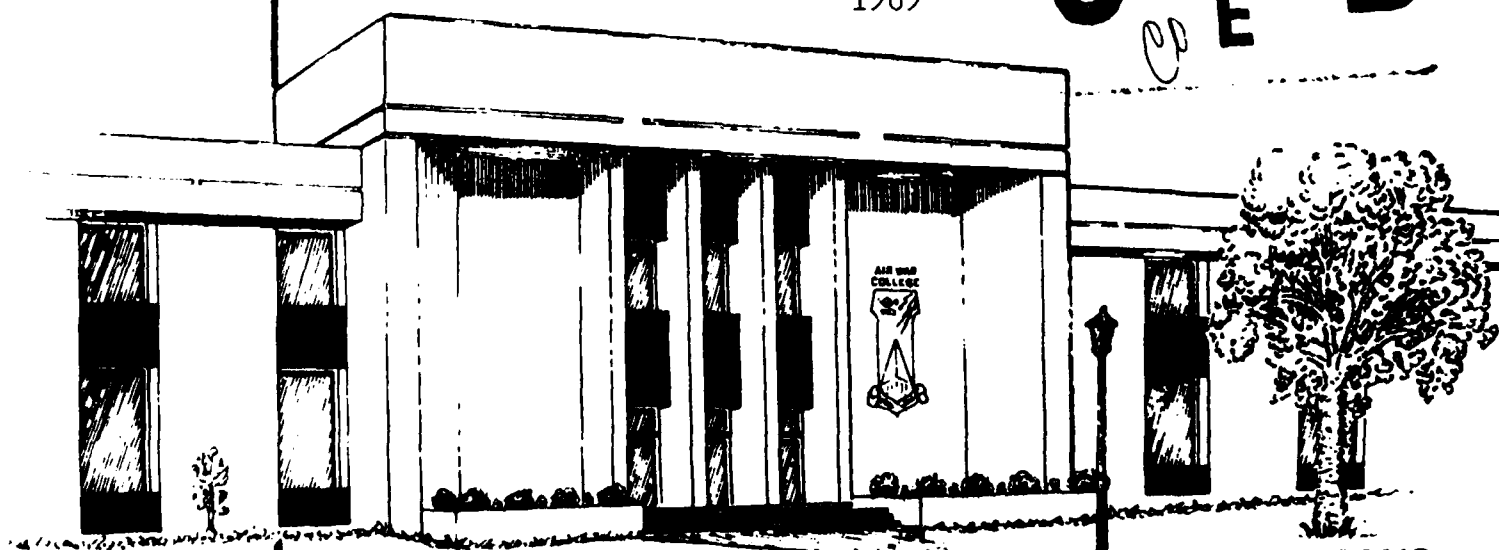
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UNITED STATES AIR FORCE  
MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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EXPANDING ROLE OF THE AIR FORCE SQUADRON COMMANDER

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A DEFENSE ANALYTICAL STUDY SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY

IN

FULFILLMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

REQUIREMENT

Advisor: Colonel Melvin L. "Smoky" Greene

MAXWELL AIR FORCE BASE, ALABAMA

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

TITLE: Expanding Role of the Air Force Squadron Commander

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Current Air Force personnel turbulence and a crisis level decline in retention may be traced to long-term effects of careerism. To reverse these trends, the Air Force has designed the new Officer Professional Development (OPD) program and related initiatives. The Chief of Staff emphasizes the vital and expanding role of the squadron commander in implementing these initiatives. The implications are clear. Squadron commanders must be carefully selected, must be educated in their unique duties, and must faithfully implement Air Force policy and programs.

This study concentrates on the expanding role of the squadron commander by focusing on the squadron commander selection process, retention, spousal issues, and the OPD program. It is intended to be a helpful guide for present and future squadron commanders in order for them to accomplish their mission successfully.

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES

Colonel Silas R. Johnson, Jr. (M.A., Pepperdine University) has been directly involved with people and leadership continuously since his initial assignment after pilot training. He has been qualified in the KC-135, RF-4C, B-52, and B-1B aircraft. Colonel Johnson has been a flying squadron flight commander, operations officer, and squadron commander; served as a flying wing assistant deputy commander for operations and deputy commander for operations; and has served as a major command personnel officer and Headquarters Air Force action officer. Colonel Johnson is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1989.

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Colonel (Sel) Henry L. Hungerbeeler (M.A., Webster University) has been assigned to the Military Airlift Command (MAC) since graduation from pilot training, including one year in combat rescue in Southeast Asia. With over 5500 hours of flying time in the C-141, he was once MAC's youngest C-141 instructor pilot and flight examiner aircraft commander. Colonel Hungerbeeler has served as an executive officer in the Office of the Chief of Staff at HQ MAC and as a liaison officer to the US Army's Combined Arms Center at Ft Leavenworth KS. At the squadron and wing levels, he has served as select lead aircraft commander, standardization-evaluation pilot, chief of operational training, chief of special operations, squadron operations officer, squadron commander, and assistant deputy commander for operations. Colonel Hungerbeeler is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1989.

Lieutenant Colonel Steven L. Tindell (M.A., Webster College) is a career personnel officer. His interests in retention and officer professional development issues surfaced while assigned to Headquarters Air Force Logistics Command as Chief, Officer and Enlisted Retention Branch in the Personnel Directorate. Lieutenant Colonel Tindell has held various personnel positions at the wing, major command, and Air Force Military Personnel Center levels. He is a graduate of the Air War College, class of 1989.



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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Successful military operations depend on unity of command. There must be a single commander at each level of command--and each commander must know what is expected of that command. Although authority for accomplishing portions of a military unit's mission may be delegated to a lower command or staff element, overall responsibility for the success or failure of the unit's mission rests solely with the commander. **The commander's leadership is the key to success.** (10-1)

What we would like to do in this study is concentrate on the expanding role of the squadron commander. To do that, we are going to discuss the squadron commander selection process and the leadership training available for squadron commanders, then provide an insight to some of the retention issues which face today's squadron commander. We will follow with a discussion of spousal issues in today's Air Force, and finally, discuss the Officer Professional Development (OPD) Program and related initiatives. The discussion includes research, thoughts, and experiences from three former squadron commanders and a career personnel officer. In addition, we interviewed 100 students from Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College to get their views on the expanding role of the squadron commander. Many of their comments are included in our study. We have concluded the study with

recommendations which will help the Air Force and squadron commanders accomplish their mission.

Since the squadron commander is the key to successful mission accomplishment, the Air Force must ensure it is selecting the right people for the job. We will look at six major command squadron commander selection programs and provide an analysis of how the programs work. We will also discuss the training available to continue to develop leadership after selection to squadron commander. Credibility in the squadron commander selection process has an effect on retention and Air Force programs.

Perhaps the greatest challenge to the present day operational squadron commander is how to retain young pilots in the Air Force. Pilots are being pulled out of the Air Force by unprecedented airline hiring and pushed out by perceived congressional and Air Force inaction to enhance the well-being of military families and to foster combat mission orientation in the workplace. Air Force pilots will continue to be pulled by the airlines for years to come. Congressional insensitivities may continue to erode pay and benefits. The Air Force, although attempting to do otherwise, may be unable to do the many things needed to diminish concern over such issues as family separation, pilot bonus impacts, and assignments.

To deal effectively with these matters, we must understand the young pilots of today come from a different

social background than those of earlier years. The young pilot's adaptation to the current Air Force environment is marked by an impatient understanding of and a lessening tolerance to problems and their solutions. Moreover, the role of the family, the spouse in particular, has emerged as a prominent force in deciding whether a young pilot should stay in the Air Force or get out. The squadron commander's ability to cope positively with this very complex set of circumstances will make a considerable difference in the current retention crisis.

Officer Professional Development logically follows discussions concerning the squadron commander, retention, and family concerns. The evolutionary OPD program is a new approach to the Air Force way of life. The momentum for OPD is in the direction of professionalism and duty performance and away from careerism. Under OPD, squadron commanders assume greater responsibility for the education and training of their officers. Officers under their commands are expected to concentrate on duty performance. Invigorated officer commitment to professionalism and duty performance will result in improved retention rates, greater commitment to the Air Force mission, and a better understanding of the Air Force way of life. We will explain the philosophy behind OPD and describe how OPD impacts education and training, evaluation of duty performance, assignment processing, and force structuring. Because the OPD program has

the support of the Air Force senior leadership, it has been permeated throughout all levels of the officer force.

## CHAPTER II

### OPERATIONAL SQUADRON COMMANDERS

Leadership is the art of influencing and directing people to accomplish the mission. The basic concept the effective leader must keep in mind encompasses two fundamental elements:

- The mission
- The people

This is the Air Force concept of leadership, and all facets of the Air Force leadership should support these two basic elements. They are embedded in the definition of leadership. (28:2)

The squadron commander is the cornerstone and building block the Air Force depends on. At the squadron level, people are led to success or failure. The squadron commander has the greatest opportunity to influence career decisions. He is the direct link between the people and senior Air Force leadership. Proper selection and development of the squadron commanders are the keys to a successful Air Force. This section will examine the task of selecting and developing the operational flying squadron commanders. We will discuss current Air Force operational flying squadron commander selection programs and analyze how well these programs work. We have based our discussion and analysis on nine interview sessions with 100 students from Squadron Officer School (SOS), Air Command and Staff College (ACSC), and Air War College (AWC).

General Curtis E. LeMay stated "leaders are not born but are educated, trained, and made, just like other professionals." (28:23-24) After an individual is selected to be a squadron commander, he develops and nurtures his individual leadership style. Training and various tools available for leadership development will be discussed.

#### Operational Squadron Commander Selection Processes

It is important to understand the current processes by which major commands (MAJCOMs) select the right people for the important positions of squadron commanders. This study looks at six MAJCOM programs: Strategic Air Command (SAC), Tactical Air Command (TAC), Military Airlift Command (MAC), Air Training Command (ATC), Pacific Air Forces (PACAF), and United States Air Forces in Europe (USAFE). All interviewed officers in SOS and ACSC are rated, and all AWC students are former flying squadron commanders. Although we only interviewed rated operations personnel, many of the comments and analyses on leadership can be applied to any commander, regardless of command.

All MAJCOM processes are very similar in structure and in concept. The purpose of each program is to select the best qualified officers to command operational squadrons. Each MAJCOM has at least one selection board per calendar year. The board process is similar to a promotion

board. Panel members are usually rated officers and have experience in the particular weapon systems in which the officers will be chosen to command (i.e., bomber, fighter, tanker, transport, etc.). The chain of command of each MAJCOM determines the number of officers to be nominated and selected. Each MAJCOM has set policy on the selection criteria for squadron commanders (e.g., only lieutenant colonels, lieutenant colonel selectees, etc.). The important point is that every eligible officer is considered for selection. Each MAJCOM Deputy Chief of Staff (DCS), Personnel, is responsible for the administration of his board. The MAJCOM Vice Commander or DCS, Operations oversees the programs. The MAJCOM Commander is the final approval authority. (16:17)

Board composition and scoring are similar between MAJCOMs, but each MAJCOM puts a different twist on its respective process. For example, for each board, MAC uses three separate panels, each chaired by a numbered Air Force commander; ATC uses one board chaired by the ATC Vice Commander; SAC, PACAF, and USAFE use one board chaired by the DCS, Operations; and TAC uses four panels for each board with the DCS, Operations acting as the board president. (16:8)

The majority of all board members for each MAJCOM are former or present flying wing commanders. This is very important because wing commanders should know what it takes



to be a flying squadron commander. They are in the best position to make the decision on who should be nominated to be a squadron commander.

The panel members base their final decision on several instruments: the officer brief, the officer command record containing his officer effectiveness reports (OERs) or the new officer performance report (OPR), decoration citations, and the official photo. SAC and TAC also include the Officer Assignment Worksheet or AF Form 90. In addition to these instruments, board members make a subjective evaluation on leadership potential. Since the measuring of leadership potential is inherently subjective, former and present wing commanders become even more important to the squadron commander selection process. (16:9)

Scoring on a MAJCOM squadron commander selection board is similar to the promotion board system. Scores usually run from a range of 6.0 to 10.0, with .5 increments, with a perfect 10.0 being the highest score. Each panel member scores each record. If there is a disparity in the scoring of a given record, that record is scored again by each panel member. In ATC, the board members review and discuss the records before scoring. All other commands score the records independently. (16:9)

Once each board makes its selection, the list of commander candidates is approved by the respective MAJCOM commander and then sent to various levels of each respective

MAJCOM. The individual candidates are not notified of the board results. The lists are kept at those various levels of command (e.g., numbered Air Force, air division commander, and wing commander). When a squadron commander vacancy occurs, the respective wing commander recommends an officer from the current MAJCOM list of candidates. In most cases the MAJCOM commander is the final approving authority. If a candidate is on the list and is not selected for command during the current year's list, he again competes for nomination and selection for the following year's list. The objective of the whole process is to select the most qualified officers for the over 300 operational flying squadron command positions in the Air Force. (16:12-13)

The MAJCOM squadron commander selection processes are soundly structured and operate very well. The procedures have some variances normally dictated by operational differences. Nevertheless, the processes provide the flexibility to select the right people for the right job. Interviews with SOS, ACSC, and AWC students reflect the students are generally satisfied with the nominees selected from these MAJCOM squadron commander selection programs. However, several criticisms did arise from these student interviews.

First, some suggest Headquarters Air Force (HQ AF) has no role in selection boards other than helping to identify candidates. Second, individuals are not notified

if they are selected on the MAJCOM list. In other words, the board results are not released publicly. The whole process is perceived to be secretive and not well advertised. Third, most students interviewed believe a squadron commander should serve a full two-year tour once selected for the position unless he does not perform satisfactorily.

It is a perception that HQ AF does not have much interest in the squadron commander selection process. Each MAJCOM has people from its respective command at the Air Force Military Personnel Center (AFMPC) who monitor the process to ensure the Air Force's and MAJCOM's credibility. There are officers serving outside of the MAJCOMs (e.g., HQ AF, joint duty, overseas, etc.) who become candidates because of HQ AF initiatives. Each MAJCOM knows its needs and should have full rein on whom it selects for squadron commander from available, eligible officers.

The second criticism of the present process is that the lists are too secretive. Although it can be argued that publicly releasing squadron commander board results would increase competitiveness, it could do more harm than good. Public release of the list could cause problems with individuals who are not on the list. Individuals who are not selected may lose interest in their jobs, become alienated or indifferent, or resign. (42:21-22) It is in the best interest of the Air Force to let the MAJCOM

commanders determine the distribution for squadron commander selection lists.

The criticism of secrecy is usually made by officers who do not know that the personnel officer responsible for a MAJCOM's squadron commander selection board would be glad to give anyone a capsule look at the process. All it takes is a phone call. Additionally, MAJCOM periodicals occasionally print articles on the process. The process is up front and anyone can find out how it works by a simple inquiry. Based upon our interviews, we need more publicity by each MAJCOM on the selection process.

The final criticism of the present selection process relates to the tenure of the job. Most students believe a squadron commander tour should last two years. A tour of less than two years gives the perception that the job is a square filler, and the person who occupies it is there for only a "touch and go." This perception is fueled by the fact that the process of selection to squadron commander is tough and only the best are selected. Thus, a majority of squadron commanders are selected for promotion before their peers or selected for other jobs with increased responsibility because of past performance and potential. It might be in the best interest of the Air Force to have the MAJCOM look at their respective squadron commander tenures and make the squadron commander job a mandatory two-

year assignment. Less than a two-year assignment would require a MAJCOM commander exception to policy.

#### Leadership Development

Once selected to command, the squadron commander assumes full responsibility for the accomplishment of the unit's mission. (10:2) This section will discuss the various programs and instruments available to operational squadron commanders to develop and to nurture individual leadership abilities and style.

Each MAJCOM has developed programs in order to help inform and teach officers to be better squadron commanders. For example, SAC has a squadron commander workshop in which the command hosts a one-week symposium for the squadron commander and spouse. SAC requires a new squadron commander attend this workshop within the first three months of command. The workshop consists of lectures and seminars on up-to-date issues facing a squadron commander. Other MAJCOMs have similar programs to develop leadership and to keep today's squadron commander informed. Each of these programs provides a valuable service to the new squadron commander.

As discussed previously, squadron commanders go through a very tough and competitive selection process. They are experts in their field. Being an expert in their individual specialty, however, will not ensure total leader-

ship success. Success also requires the ability to see where the Air Force is and where it is going. A good way to do this is through membership in professional societies and associations and by reading professional and governmental publications. Because squadron personnel read such publications as Air Force Magazine, Airman, and Air Force Times, they can sometimes get the wrong impression due to bad or misplaced journalism. The squadron commander has to be proactive in anticipating and countering misleading information.

The following is a list of publications which would enhance a squadron commander's leadership role:

(1) Guidelines for Command, AU-2, Maxwell AFB, AL: Air Command Staff College, September 1988.

(2) Tips for Commanders, Vol I-IV, Leadership and Management Development Center, Maxwell AFB, AL: Air University, 1988.

(3) Air Force Issues Book, AF/CVAZ, Washington D.C., published annually.

(4) Taking Charge: A Practical Guide for Leaders, National Defense University Press Publications, 1986.

(5) Appropriate MAJCOM Squadron Commander publications such as SAC's Squadron Commander's Workshop Handbook and Aircrew Commander's Handbook.

Having looked at the squadron commander selection process and the training available to nurture leadership, we

now turn our attention to retention issues which face  
today's squadron commander and his expanding role.

## CHAPTER III

### RETENTION

Although retention is generally good across the spectrum of the officer corps, clearly the Air Force is having a pilot retention problem in the six- to eleven-year group. The society, family, and professional pressures exacerbating the retention problem are varied and require in-depth understanding. Inasmuch as the squadron commander has great influence among those pilots in the six- to eleven-year group, he must master the intricacies of the retention issue, cutting through the emotion of the argument, if he is to contribute to its solution.

Furthermore, the squadron commander, because of his title and visibility, must accept he is a role model for the younger officers. When the young officer looks at his squadron commander and asks the question, "Is that what I want to be when I grow up?", hopefully, he will answer "yes" based upon a positive example. Should a pilot form a negative opinion about the squadron commander, the pilot may ultimately decide, because of that negative opinion, to want to be neither a squadron commander nor a career officer.

The squadron commander's ability to present himself as an appropriate role model, to understand the many concerns of the young pilot, to articulate the demands of the



Air Force, and to offer valued counsel may well make the difference as to whether the young pilot continues his career in the Air Force or resigns his commission.

In his decision-making process to stay in the Air Force or to get out, the young pilot faces different pressures, and faces them differently, than his predecessor of just a few years ago. Changes within the American society over the past 20-30 years have modified the attitudes and mores of the individual. These changes have manifested themselves through an increased awareness of materialism, a greater propensity for both spouses within the family unit to work to afford the heightened materialism, a need for the dependent spouse to seek outside-the-family careerism for self-fulfillment and security, and an intensified attitude of "me first."

Given the military population is in many ways a cross section of society, it is reasonable to assume that society's character is reflected throughout the Air Force environment. For the young pilot, then, social change has thrust him into an environment in which his view of what he wants in life may not be consistent with the professional demands and opportunities within the Air Force.

Another factor influencing retention is the family stressors affecting the pilot's decision to make the Air Force a career. Family integrity and well being are often put to the test when the officer perceives the government or

the Air Force is not taking proper care of his or her dependents. Perceptions are an individual's reality. When they are negative, whether based on fact or fancy, they become irritants. Conversely, when perceptions are positive, they become strong motivators. Presently, many active duty members and their families are disillusioned with the government's and Air Force's ability to meet the needs of the family in such matters as geographical stability, pay and benefits, and overall quality of life. Until such time the Air Force changes the perceptions surrounding family issues, the pilot will be confronted with family stress.

Finally, the young pilot critically assesses, perhaps more so than his predecessor, whether the Air Force meets his professional and occupational demands. For the modern day pilot, this assessment varies as much from weapons system to weapons system as it does from individual to individual. Today's pilot is less apt to put up with the long hours of his predecessor. He is less tolerant of the "supply and demand" assignment policy, over which he has little control. He feels his concerns should be heard and acted upon by the Air Force leadership. These and other professional issues help mold each young pilot's picture of the Air Force institution. Should the Air Force not meet the individual pilot's needs, he or she is likely to seek alternative career options, which over the past few years have become readily available.

For the Air Force pilot, seeking an alternative career is a result of the forces emanating from society, his family, and his occupation. When these forces are out of harmony with the Air Force profession, the pilot finds himself in conflict with what he wants in life and what the Air Force demands. Such conflict is the source of the retention crisis for within this environment of conflict the young pilot must decide his future. The following discussion offers an analysis of five issues which are of present Air Force concern. The issues are interrelated; hence, much of what can be said of one can be said of another. Discussed within all of them, however, are many of the concerns and irritants that drive a great number of high quality pilots out of the Air Force. The issues are the pilot bonus, airline hiring, Air National Guard and Air Force Reserve opportunity, working conditions, and changing attitudes.

#### Pilot Bonus

No Air Force issue discussed among the 100 SOS, ACSC, or AWC rated officers evoked more vocal comment than the recently instituted pilot bonus. Most of the pilots, regardless of weapons system, are literally outraged over the use of the bonus as a retention tool. Their concerns fall within three central themes: the bonus is an insult to professional service, career potential is undercut by the

effects of the bonus, and the system will put pressure on those who choose to take the bonus.

#### Professional Service

The bonus is viewed almost unanimously as mercenary, even by those who have accepted it. For many, professional service transcends money. Obviously, professional officers expect to be paid for their work, but they do not appreciate being offered a carrot which has nothing to do with their professional status. The bonus lost its professional perspective when Congress, for budgetary reasons, forced the Air Force to offer it to only those pilots in weapons systems with critical retention shortfalls. Pilots understand the economics of that decision. Congress, on the other hand, does not seem to understand the folly of it. By targeting the bonus, Congress sent the message that all aviators are not treated equally. Furthermore, the precept of a professional, rated officer corps is not meaningful anymore. The result is a movement away from the recognition of military service as a profession to a congressional assertion that military service can be bought. Such mercenary tactics are an insult to the professional, rated officer corps.

#### Career Potential

For many young officers, the bonus goes beyond the point of professional insult to one of impracticality. The

bonus forces a career decision too early. Early in their tenures, many officers do not know whether they want to stay in the Air Force for a career. Certainly, many are not ready at the six- to seven-year point to commit themselves to staying in until at least year fourteen, the end of the bonus years. Furthermore, the way the bonus system is designed, the officer must commit himself as early as possible if he wishes to receive the most he can from the bonus. Instead of opting to stay in for an indefinite period of time, the pilot may choose to make an early decision to get out. From a practical standpoint, the Air Force has put the young pilot between a rock and a hard place.

Moreover, for those who choose to take the bonus, there are concerns from the economic point of view. Some pilots are fearful Congress may renege on the bonus program after the pilots have committed to up to seven years additional service. Others are concerned about the severe pay cut at year 14. Many pilots would have preferred to have a lump sum up front to hedge against a fickle Congress and to simplify the management of the bonus money. Others would have simply preferred an increase in flight pay. Clearly, even with the bonus, there is no indication of a renewed interest in service past the year 14. In fact, pilots indicate they will just delay separation until the 14-year point instead of something less. By so doing, they will have received both the bonus money and a continued

opportunity to enter a still economically viable marketplace after the bonus years.

What will the Air Force have gotten? To many, the Air Force will have gotten additional commitment only by those pilots who are attracted by money and who are the fence-sitters. Those pilots are perhaps not the ones the Air Force should be focusing on. On the other hand, those who are committed to military service for professional reasons do not require the bonus in the first place. Indeed, for the professionally-oriented pilot, the bonus has been demotivating to the extent that some pilots have resigned in disillusionment. In general, then, the pilots interviewed considered the bonus a failure as a career enhancement tool.

#### System Pressure

The Air Force is offering the bonus to selective pilots with good intentions in mind. Nevertheless, many pilots are concerned that, should they take the bonus, their careers will be screened and manipulated to their disadvantage. Already, there are signs that the bonus pilots are being set apart from their peers who did not choose the bonus. Comments such as "If you want me to change the TACAN channel, it will cost you \$500." may be said in jest, but such comments indicate a special relationship is emerging between bonus and nonbonus pilots.

Furthermore, many bonus pilots have fears, now that the system has hold of them for a number of years, they will be manipulated to do things that those who did not take the bonus will not do or would no longer be asked to do. Any emerging paranoia on this issue could become widespread if there is the slightest indication that nonbonus pilots are being given assignment priority, or that one pilot got a good deal that another did not get because of his bonus status. The squadron commander will need to take proactive action to squelch misguided perceptions and to discredit any attempts by anyone to take advantage of the vulnerability of the bonus pilots.

#### Airline Hiring

Clearly, airline hiring is the most influential retention issue. The airlines have offered an alternative career track for military pilots. If the hiring rates were low, presumably the Air Force would not have a retention problem. Some say the irritants of military service push pilots to the airlines. Others say the pull of the airlines causes pilots to separate. No doubt, present day pilots are more vocal about the many things of military life which irritate them. If there were no alternative flying career, such as with the airlines, would they be so vocal? Indeed, most pilots will agree that an individual's tolerance level for irritants is lower when the airlines are hiring. For

most, then, the airlines are the catalyst for pilot separation, fueled by a lessening tolerance for the sacrifices of military service.

As with the pilot bonus, there is also the practical side of going to the airlines. The airlines are paying big bucks. The Air Force cannot compete with the airlines for money. Neither can the Air Force compete for lifestyle. Many pilots, through change in career goals or pressure from family, no longer want the nomadic lifestyle of military service. Going to the airlines can give those who want alternative careers the best of both worlds, more money and a more stable lifestyle.

#### Guard and Reserve Opportunity

The Air National Guard and the Air Force Reserve have become an ever more attractive alternative to exiting military pilots. Many of the pilots getting out of active duty service do not go to the airlines. These pilots elect to go to the guard or reserve to continue to fly military aircraft in a more stable environment. There are a great number of pilots, though, who join both the airlines and the guard or reserve. Interestingly, many pilots who join both the airlines and the guard or reserve do not remain with the military service for very long. They continue with the guard or reserve only until their airline probation is completed and their airline pay is sufficient to allow them



to discontinue military service. Clearly, these pilots are motivated by money and lifestyle. Fortunately, for those who stay in the guard or reserve, the Air Force continues to use their expertise under the total force concept.

#### Working Conditions

Regardless of the many Field Management Inspections (FMI) conducted over the years, and the resultant actions to reduce the aircrew member duty day, pilots still complain of too many 12-hour days and too many additional duties. These complaints vary from MAJCOM to MAJCOM. Pilots in some MAJCOMs indicate their duty days are very long due to an inordinate number of additional duties. Other pilots are pleased with their duty days and the additional duty workload. Why the disparity between MAJCOMs? We don't know, but the signal is clear. Pilots in the MAJCOMs with long duty days are distressed and tired.

Pilots want to fly and fight. They don't want to be the best doughnut seller in the wing. They want to belong to a combat unit doing combat related things. They don't want to have to change out of the flight suit into some other uniform when they're not flying. They want the time to study mission-related tactics manuals and intelligence documents that relate directly to their flying jobs. They don't want the constant on-the-job pressure, which seems inconsistent with peacetime activities. They want the

opportunity to fly as often as they can to maintain proficiency in their wartime mission. The list goes on and on.

The many wants and don't wants of the young pilots seem to be feeding on themselves because of the demographics of the pilot force. The pilot force is considerably younger than it used to be. No longer do we see a substantial number of older pilots at the squadron level. We have lost this older cadre of pilots who served as role models, instructors, and war story tellers. No longer does the Air Force have a group of older pilots who can lead the younger pilots through the ups and downs of military service. Many of the higher ranking pilots we do have are in nonflying billets, hardly a strong motivator for career service. So the squadron is led, apart from the squadron commander and operations officer, by an infrastructure of young instructors and flight commanders who are short on motivation. Not short intentionally, but short because of their youth and inexperience. The response is that young pilots will breed, in classic group dynamics fashion, on the misguided discontent of others, thus lowering tolerance levels and forcing the premature separation of many of them.

#### Changed Attitudes

Based on our review and analysis of the many interviews we had with the SOS, ACSC, and AWC students, we feel

confident in saying the young officers of recent years have a different outlook on Air Force life than those of us with more seniority. What is it with this outlook that forces a young pilot to get out and go to the airlines? Is it just money and lifestyle? What makes the young pilot less tolerant to the stresses of military life? The answers to these questions are not simple, but they seem to revolve around two themes: many young pilots view military flying as an occupation, not necessarily a profession; and pilots enter the Air Force with certain expectations which for many are not met.

#### Occupation vs Profession

Numerous young pilots expressed to us the notion there is little difference between flying in the Air Force and working in a corporation. Flying is just another job. These officers seem to have lost sight of the professional nature of military service, to say nothing of the love of flying. They say they are just as dedicated and professional as any other officer, but, when the airlines offer them jobs, they express no professional remorse to go get them.

Moreover, these pilots seem to be engaged in a constant process of comparing the Air Force to a large corporation, evaluating health plans and retirement systems. Although they will not come right out and say it, they imply

they want what is best for "me." Clearly, there is a shift from the attraction of national military service to monetary motivation. Somewhere along the line, many young pilots have developed the attitude that professionalism is archaic, that success is measured in money and things, not something so esoteric as the satisfaction of military service.

In all fairness, we are acutely aware there are many young pilots who are just the kind of professional officers the Air Force needs. For them, professionalism is alive and well. They are willing and able to endure the hardships and sacrifice that delineates the military profession from an occupation. What makes them different from those who have less motivation for military service is beyond the scope of this study, but is something the Air Force should investigate thoroughly.

### Expectations

Within the mindset that military service is just an occupation, a number of young pilots feel they signed a contract with the Air Force when they were commissioned. Many do not feel the Air Force is living up to the bargain. They were told they would fly. So what's all this additional duty stuff, and why am I flying only three times a week? Many were given unrealistic expectations during precommissioning programs. Now, these young pilots are questioning why they have to move so often. They are not

having the fun they were told they would have. Having come from social environments in which they got what they wanted in life, they are disillusioned when they no longer get what they expect.

In a more general sense, the expectations of the young pilot reflect those of society. Young people in society expect things to be given to them. When officers are commissioned, they do not just automatically do away with those expectations. They want and expect certain things from the Air Force. We all do. The difference may lie in the orientation of the expectations. Are they for self or for the service? Furthermore, the United States has an all-volunteer force. Pilots expect big things for their volunteerism. They want to fly, to be needed by the Air Force, to have an enjoyable lifestyle, and to have security for themselves and their families. When these wants or expectations are not met or the draw of alternative careerism becomes too great, the pilot will get out of the service. The solutions to the conflicts between expectations, professional demands, and alternative careerism will be difficult to find and to implement.

#### Solutions

Even though solutions to the current retention crisis are illusive, the Air Force has no choice but to make a concerted effort to try to resolve the crisis. From our

interviews with SOS, ACSC, and AWC students, we have concluded that retention is affected by three major forces: military pilot drain to the airline industry, inappropriate officer candidate selection criteria, and shallow pre-commissioning education and training. The long-term solutions to the retention crisis may well depend on the Air Force's ability to manipulate these forces to its advantage.

#### Pilots to Airlines

Without the unprecedented hiring of the airline industry, the Air Force would not have the retention problem it has. Clearly, something needs to be done to protect military pilots from premature career moves to the airlines. Unless airline hiring practices change, the Air Force could have critical shortages in certain weapons systems to the degree that it will be unable to meet its mission requirements. Should that happen, national security could be jeopardized. It seems reasonable, therefore, that the Air Force should attack the airline hiring problem headon.

The solution to the airline hiring problem will require radical action. The airlines must understand that the viability of the Air Force pilot pool is important to both the nation and the airlines. Moreover, the real world dictates the Air Force will continue to be the primary source of pilots to the airlines. To resolve the conflict between pilot needs and airline hiring policies, the Air

Force and the airline industry will need to negotiate a coalition strategy which will be mutually beneficial to both institutions.

One such coalition strategy must ensure the Air Force has full use of its pilots for a given tenure. An agreed upon tenure will allow the Air Force to retain pilot resources, unencumbered by airline interference, for a given period of time to meet force structure, experience, and mission requirements. At some point in a pilot's career, when the Air Force can afford to let the pilot go, the airlines would be free to hire him or her. Such a strategy must ensure the Air Force has the necessary inventory of pilots to meet mission needs while providing post-military service guarantees of airline employment and retirement compensation.

A second strategy designed to lessen the impact of airline hiring to the Air Force pilot pool is to train more pilots. Lieutenant General Hickey, HQ AF DCS, Personnel, in his 20 March 1989, Air Force Times article, postulated the requirement to increase substantially the number of Air Force pilots trained each year. He insists increased training is the primary way to guarantee pilot numbers sufficient to serve both the Air Force and the airlines. In the final analysis, General Hickey believes Congress will need to legislate the solution to the retention problem.

### Officer Candidate Selection Criteria

Airline hiring is not the only major problem affecting retention. It seems clear the Air Force is dealing with officer candidates whose outlook on professional military service is tainted by a changed society. Professionalism for many young people has given way to monetary and lifestyle motivations. Military service cannot guarantee comparable pay and family stability as found in much of the civilian sector. Congress is slowly but steadily eroding the many pay and benefits initiatives that have made military service a competitive career environment during the recent past. Now, professionalism is the only unique, enduring quality of military service the Air Force can sell to prospective officer candidates.

If the Air Force cannot offer pay and benefits comparability to prospective officers, then the Air Force must learn how to recruit quality people who will want to make the Air Force a career based on professionalism. Accordingly, officer candidate selection criteria must concentrate on those human qualities which revolve around a penchant for professional service. We do not assume to know exactly what those criteria should be, nor do we know how to identify those who are attracted to military service. We leave that to the experts. If the Air Force is to recruit young pilots with the grit necessary to weather the inevitable ups and downs of military service, however, it



must do so based on the premise that qualities such as love of country and want of military service will be more enduring than the attraction to money or to lifestyle.

#### Precommissioning Education and Training

It is one thing to identify and select professionally oriented officer candidates. It is another to educate and train them to bring out those professional qualities to the benefit of the Air Force. Our interviews with the SOS, ACSC, and AWC students revealed the Air Force could do a better job of motivating our officer candidates to be pilots and career officers.

For example, there are perceptions Air Force Academy graduates are not motivated to be pilots like they used to be. Many recent graduates feel they were coerced to go to pilot training for fear of being branded second-class citizens for not going. Instead of positively motivating the cadets to fly, many of the Academy faculty are stressing the negative aspects of not flying. Such negative reinforcement tactics on young men and women make a profound impact on the self-esteem of those who are undecided about flying.

The effect is that many cadets will be pushed into going to pilot training when they really didn't want to go. A few years later they will get out of the Air Force, disappointed and frustrated. Similar events happen to ROTC

cadets. If this perception is in fact real, it is but one example of Air Force negligence to educate and train adequately our impressionable young officer candidates.

Perhaps the Air Force needs to take a fresh look at precommissioning education and training to see if there is a better way to do business. For example, is the Air Force giving unrealistic expectations to officer candidates? Once given, can these expectations be met? Our interviewed students would say no. Pilot candidates are told they will fly more than is proven to be true. Family separations are more than were expected. Duty days are longer than were anticipated. An officer has little control over the assignment process.

One could make the case the Air Force is not educating and training officer candidates in the right stuff. Look at the Marine Corps. Why do the Marines not have a pilot retention problem? Do they have an education and training program which instills the right mix of pride, professionalism, and realistic expectations to carry a young pilot through his military career? If so maybe the Air Force could borrow some of the Marine methodology.

Clearly, the Air Force must do more to ensure proper precommissioning education and training. Fortunately, the newly instituted OPD program will go a long way to revitalize this education and training process. More needs to be done. In the final analysis, an improved officer

candidate selection process coupled with invigorated precommissioning programs should greatly enhance pilot retention.

#### Chapter Conclusion

Declining pilot retention is the product of society, family, and professional pressures. Changed social values, an increased family lack of acceptance of the stresses of military life, and the perceived unacceptable demands of military service often compound to the point a pilot no longer chooses to stay in the Air Force. The distressed pilot will seek relief by choosing an alternative career such as the airlines.

Notwithstanding the impact these forces have on the pilot, they also have profound impact on the spouse. The spouse's influence on a pilot's decision to stay in the Air Force or get out seems to be as great as the influences of society and the military profession. Accordingly, we have set aside the following chapter to discuss spousal issues.

## CHAPTER IV

### SPOUSAL ISSUES

Spousal issues are an unique and important subset of matters affecting retention and, thus, are an important part of the expanding role of the squadron commander. These issues are certainly not new. Nor is it new for the Air Force to pay attention to spouses and families. The Air Force has always recognized their importance. Specific issues concerning spouses of Air Force members, however, came to the forefront in 1987 when a group of senior officers' wives protested they were not allowed to seek outside employment. In response, the Air Force convened a Blue Ribbon Panel on Spouse Issues to examine the complex issues of spouse employment and of spouse participation in activities supporting Air Force families. (40) Extracts from and comments on that report follow. The comments are those we heard during our research and interviews and have experienced through personal observations. Our research supports the findings of the Blue Ribbon Panel and indicates the issues are not yet settled.

#### Historical Perspective

Traditionally, the spouses (most commonly wives) of Air Force members have shared a deep sense of pride and

responsibility as members of the Air Force community. There is no doubt they have made a significant contribution to the morale and well-being of Air Force people. Volunteering in neighborhood or charitable activities and participating in the social life of the community have become so inherent a part of Air Force life that they are "institutionalized in the minds of many." (35:1) Indeed, the fact that these activities are "institutionalized in the minds of many" is a primary source of trouble today. As we will see later, the Air Force has taken some appropriate steps to announce the policy that these activities are very much appreciated, but must be completely voluntary. Nevertheless, the perception endures that the actual policy of the Air Force is the traditional one.

The military has historically been an organization composed almost entirely of single members. Before World War II, a relatively small number of military officers were married, and the role of their wives was both highly visible and important. Clearly, they directed the post's social life and helped meet community needs. Moreover, almost all enlisted men were single when they entered the service and tended to remain so throughout their enlistment. The highly visible role of the few officers' wives, therefore, affected the enlisted environment as well. (35:1)

The characteristic of unmarried members has dominated the military for most of its history. In the latter

part of the 20th century, however, the number of those married increased in both the officer and enlisted ranks. Today, the Air Force has over 385,000 spouses while 64 percent of its members have family responsibilities. (35:1)

#### Changes in American Society

Independently, but in agreement with the Blue Ribbon Panel, we found that changes in society since Vietnam have had a substantial impact on the family and on the role of the Air Force spouse. In the past, certain responsibilities fell on the shoulders of the wife. These responsibilities were not universally enjoyed, but were generally accepted as a matter of course. Today, these responsibilities have increased dramatically, but no longer remain unquestioned. (35:1) More wives today have academic degrees and career aspirations than their predecessors. One ACSC officer said it is not a cliché that the Air Force recruits people but retains families (Appendix B), implying that if the family is unhappy with the Air Force, the officer will not stay in, and vice versa. Others emphasized we now live in a more materialistic society. Our younger officers, having grown up in that society, are now frequently motivated more by money than national service. We generally agree with the officers we interviewed that society is giving the Air Force a different product today than just a few years ago. Unfortunately, there is a perception the Air Force leadership has

neither consistently nor uniformly adapted to these differences. (Appendix B)

Furthermore, our research supports the Blue Ribbon Panel finding that

Subtle changes in the nations family structure have created dichotomy for the Air Force spouse--accommodate the needs and aspirations of the individual family while meeting the needs of the broader family, the Air Force community. For economic, personal, or professional reasons, many Air Force spouses are now employed outside the home. The changes in family structure have brought about a situation in which the expectations of traditional spousal contributions are now a source of conflict. (35:1)

Several officers told us, "My wife never joined the Air Force." (Appendix C) A majority of married officers no longer favorably anticipate a permanent change of station (PCS) because of the negative effects on the spouse and family. Many spouses are working to support future expenses such as college for children. Others are working to maintain a standard of living perceived to be declining because military pay has failed to remain "comparable" to civilian pay. Out-of-pocket expenses, such as losses on real estate during PCS moves, greatly aggravate the problem. Economic pressures on the family are definite dissatisfiers.

#### Air Force Response to 1987 Protest

Early in September 1987, the Secretary of the Air Force and the Chief of Staff established a Blue Ribbon Panel to study the entire issue of spouse employment and of

volunteer activities. The panel's charter was to

examine the range of activities in which spouses have traditionally participated; clarify the concept of participation; identify the extent and causes of pressures and conflicts between employment or career aspirations and participation in the Air Force community; and recommend to the Secretary and Chief how best to resolve or minimize those conflicts. (35:2)

Earlier in 1987, the Air Force had issued a policy statement concerning employment of Air Force spouses. The Blue Ribbon Panel found most people either were not aware of the policy or found it "unclear," "contradictory," or "ambiguous." (35:6) The Secretary of Defense later issued his own policy statement. More people found this to be clear and many described it as "long overdue." (35:6))

However,

to be effective, most people believed there would have to be fundamental changes in attitudes. They stated that the Air Force leadership at all levels must be vigorously committed to the letter and spirit of the official policy. Most expressed doubts that the system would change because of the large number of senior officers or senior officer wives who have stated their support for the traditional "two-for-one" policy. (35:6)

Our research indicates continued skepticism about the official Air Force policy.

#### Perceptions of the People

The officers we interviewed agree with the Blue Ribbon Panel report. Their common belief is that the "two-for-one" policy is currently in being, and spouse participation will continue to be a major factor in promotion and



selection for command. The report stated that virtually all spouses, regardless of the member's rank, expressed unhappiness with the "two-for-one" concept and feared the system would be slow to change. They felt field commanders set actual policy, not the Pentagon. The participants interviewed by the Blue Ribbon Panel believed there would still be a group of senior officers who, unless convinced otherwise, would use spouse participation as a promotion and command discriminator, "... either because they personally believed it was expected or because they personally believed in the practice." (35:6) Although we understand at least one wing commander has been fired for violating Air Force policy on this issue, that information, for privacy reasons, is not widely known. The perception persists among all we interviewed that the official policy is "eyewash." In fact, with the wing commanders' new authority for promotion recommendations under the new officer evaluation system (OES), some people consider spousal participation more necessary than ever.

According to the Blue Ribbon Panel, younger officers, aircrew members in particular, were outspoken in their rejection of the unwritten, traditional policy.

They believed that a spouse's employment or participation should have no impact on an officer's career. They also speculated that a system in which the spouse's participation influences an officer's upward mobility could very well penalize those who have no spouse. This practice suggests to them that something other than individual merit and potential determines career progression. (35:7)

Although we could not determine why aircrew members in particular are more "outspoken in their rejection" of the "two-for-one" policy, that certainly seems to be a fact.

Like the Blue Ribbon Panel, we find Air Force people believe that a change in attitude must occur throughout the entire chain of command if a new policy is going to work. Repeatedly, Air Force members and spouses perceive wing commanders will continue to follow the old "unwritten policy" rather than a written policy that is not enforced by their superiors. The officers we interviewed describe this point as an "integrity issue." (35:7) We cannot overemphasize the importance of integrity and how frequently the lack of it is perceived as a problem. Since the Air Force rightfully demands integrity from its members, it is only right that the members expect the highest levels of integrity from Air Force leadership. The squadron commander thus has a key role in understanding and faithfully implementing the new policy expressed in Air Force Regulation 30-51, Air Force Members' Marital Status and Activities of Their Spouses.

#### Family Needs

The Air Force traditionally has worked hard to satisfy the needs of its members and their families. To meet these needs the Air Force has put to work two distinct support networks, sometimes working in conjunction with each

other and at other times disconnected. One is an informal network of volunteers, mostly wives, and the other is a formal network of human services agencies.

In terms of the informal network, commanders heretofore typically looked to their wives for help in family matters, including the organizing and running of support groups for family members of subordinates. Most senior staff members at wing level and above told the Blue Ribbon Panel that a participating wife is an essential ingredient to command because "she sets the family atmosphere and tone for everyone in the unit." (35:8)

The informal network frequently was reported as attempting to meet needs primarily through traditional social events. Many senior officers and commanders felt, and continue to feel, that socializing provides an opportunity to communicate information and promote unit cohesion. On the other hand, many Air Force people feel that wing or base social "requirements" are too frequent, too often mandatory, and not very beneficial. Sometimes these functions supporting the Air Force family are at the expense of the individual family. Social functions at the squadron level, however, are generally viewed as worthwhile and more meaningful. (35:8)

#### Unwarranted Pressures

Even though most spouses indicated they willingly participated in activities supporting the Air Force

community, they said pressure on them to participate does exist. It was pointed out by members and spouses that the seeds of expectation to participate are planted in precommissioning programs at Officer Training School, Reserve Officer Training Corps, and the Air Force Academy. These expectations continue to heighten through professional military education programs with courses dedicated to the role of the commander's spouse. (35:11)

We strongly support and appreciate the Air Force's recognition of the role of the spouse by the inclusion of the spouse at commanders' orientations. Nevertheless, it should be apparent by now that the spouse's role cannot remain what it has traditionally been. It is imperative that the commanders' orientations emphasize this new role and provide guidance and ideas on how to cope with recent changes to policy as expressed in AFR 30-51.

As stated previously, Air Force spouses choose to pursue employment opportunities and career aspirations for many reasons. Some are seeking the same professional fulfillment as their military spouses. Others have purely economic motives. For many, childrens' college expenses or other legitimate family necessities, combined with less-than-"comparable" military pay, make a spouse's contribution to the family income a must.

The conflict between traditional expectations and the new role of women in modern families results in significant consequences. Conflict reduces participation in voluntary activities, erodes morale of members and their

families, adversely impacts retention, and limits the creative leadership of squadron commanders.

Much of the pressure perceived by spouses arises from the fear that reducing their participation in activities will adversely affect the officers' careers. The Blue Ribbon Panel found that participation is in fact reduced rather than enhanced by such pressure. Many spouses stated they objected to being "told" they had to do something, rather than being asked to "help." As a result, some of the spouses said they have chosen to volunteer less because of the continued pressure on them. (35:12-13)

While some people see participation in voluntary activities, including socials, as a contributor to positive morale, others believe that the constant pressure actually erodes morale. A number of examples center around base-level social events, which are described as "mandatory fun" at the expense of personal family time and needs.

Much criticism of participation is due to monetary reasons. Many colonels and lieutenant colonels are concerned with the increased pressure to participate at a time when they are under the heaviest financial strain due to college-age children. In many instances, spouses are torn between getting jobs to help pay their childrens' college expenses and increasing their participation in Air Force activities to help the members' advancements. Squadron commanders routinely complain of \$200 per month Officers Club

bills and the feeling that the real reason for so much "mandatory fun" is to keep the club financially solvent. "Generally, people felt frustrated trying to understand exactly what the Air Force expects of spouses and what kinds of activities the Air Force really values." (35:13)

A major finding of the Blue Ribbon Panel was the adverse impact that pressure on spouses has on retention. Many members feel caught between the demands of their own families and those of the Air Force. When family priorities and organization demands come into conflict, many of today's members report they are more likely to give greater attention to their family situation and leave the service if necessary. (35:13)

Another reaction to spousal pressure was given by the aircrew members, who felt it was part of an overall integrity issue.

On one hand, they saw the Air Force stressing job performance and professionalism. On the other hand, they report being told that a participating wife is the tie-breaker between two "equally qualified" officers. (35:13)

An Air Force-sponsored, computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) shows that "almost 60 percent of the spouses and members, at all levels, believe that spouse participation is 'essential' or 'probably helpful' to the advancement of the member's career." (35:13-14)

The majority of aircrew members interviewed by the Blue Ribbon Panel and by us stated that the demands on wives

were time consuming and loaded with pressure. They stated that in their view the wives were "the real victims of the system" and "most of the wives did not look forward to the member assuming a command." (35:14) Officers emphasized that their wives do participate, but they reject the concept that the wives should be required to do so.

#### Women Officers

Women officers who are married to officers are affected by the issue of spousal participation in two different ways, their role as the spouse of an Air Force member and the extent and range of participation expected of them as both officers and wives. The perception that the system gives a spouse distinct roles and responsibilities was heard constantly. "Military women believe that the Air Force expects a level and kind of participation which cannot be accomplished by a spouse who is also a member of the military." (35:14)

According to the women officers who addressed the Blue Ribbon Panel, these elements, role of the spouse and spouse participation, create extreme pressure and stress.

Women officers are discouraged by the perception that an officer who has no wife is a less effective officer and, therefore, a less suitable candidate for advancement. In essence, women officers reported that they see themselves in a virtually intolerable situation. They perceive that the present system is not ready or willing to accommodate the dual role of women as officers and wives. (35:14)

### Creative Leadership

The final consequences of traditional expectations of spousal participation are the limitations placed on a commander's leadership and creativity. A number of commanders interviewed by us and the Blue Ribbon Panel felt constrained by the tradition to "play the game" according to the old rules.

That is how they got to be commanders and how they felt the Air Force expected them to carry out the rules of engagement. Basically, they are not challenged to be more innovative in dealing with family and spouse issues. The feeling of frustration is passed down to many potential commanders who, in surprising numbers, said they would not really want the job if it were offered to them. Predictably, women and single members felt excluded from command opportunities, because they did not fit the traditional model. (35:15)

We find continued skepticism on the part of most Air Force officers and their spouses concerning the Air Force's "real" policy on marital status and spousal activities. For example, there is still a strong perception that unmarried members have little or no opportunity to command. This could be alleviated by publishing the married and unmarried command statistics. For example, what is the percentage of commands held by unmarried officers compared to the percentage of unmarried officers in the population of officers eligible to command?

The Blue Ribbon Panel did an outstanding job, but its solution, AFR 30-51, is perceived by many as "eyewash." The issues addressed by the Blue Ribbon Panel are not closed



in the minds of Air Force members. Much action needs to take place before the desired effects will be realized. Officer Professional Development (OPD) is an excellent beginning to the proper action.

## CHAPTER V

### OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional Air Force officers form the foundation of our nation's warfighting strength. They stand ready to participate in the implementation of the national security strategy. Committed officers exhibit a disciplined, warrior attitude. Such a positive attitude becomes the cornerstone of deterrence and must be sustained at a high level in order for the United States to defend its national interests.

(17:1, 1-1) Nurturing this positive attitude and developing professional commitment are the challenges! To meet these challenges, the Air Force has implemented the evolutionary Officer Professional Development (OPD) program, the most influential tool shaping Air Force officers' attitudes since the Defense Officer Personnel Management Act (DOPMA) in September 1981. (7:3) The success of this program falls on the shoulders of all officers, supervisors, squadron commanders, and senior leadership. It is a program that must be managed in coordination with retention efforts and in the interest of improving the quality-of-life programs for our military families. In its infancy stage, the OPD program is gaining momentum and support. From the 100 officers we interviewed, there was overwhelming support for OPD and a willingness to give the program time to mature. (Appendix D)

The OPD program increases Air Force emphasis on primary duty performance and greatly reduces emphasis on careerism. (17:1-7) The program redefines a continuing process of raising all Air Force officers' professional competence in their current jobs and prepares officers for increased responsibility. (39) According to General Larry D. Welch, Air Force Chief of Staff, OPD is "a redirection of our way of thinking about ourselves, our service, and our role as professionals." (22:2) The following section of this paper explains the OPD program including philosophy, objectives, and developmental phase points. A sound understanding of OPD in action leads to an understanding of how the program impacts the officer force in the areas of education and training, evaluation, assignment process, and force structuring. This section also discusses how OPD cuts across the complete life cycle of an officer's career from precommissioning to separation or retirement. In each life cycle stage, the squadron commander assumes added responsibility. The squadron commander becomes the role model, the counselor, the listener, and the evaluator. In many areas of OPD, the squadron commander is the main actor. In other areas, the squadron commander must be knowledgeable of and articulate in all aspects of the OPD program to be an effective leader and counselor. Involvement of the squadron commander in each stage of the OPD process is essential.

## Philosophy

### The Problem

Some officers are more concerned with individual careers and long-term promotion goals than current mission-oriented duty performance. This "careerism" is defined in three ways. First, some officers are too concerned with their careers and become too preoccupied with how to get ahead. Second, the officers are willing to advance their careers at the expense of integrity. Third, the officers become too preoccupied with career advancement or promotion at the expense of basic duty performance. (12) Careerism grew from four common misbeliefs. First, one cannot get promoted based only on solid duty performance. Second, securing good jobs requires by-name requests from a sponsor. Third, officers have no say in the assignment process. Finally, a successful career requires promotion to colonel. (15) These misbeliefs point to institutional problems and exemplify an overly ambitious officer with a "me first" attitude. Unfortunately, some officers pursue their ambitions at the expense of other officers and the mission. It must be noted that not all careerism is bad, but it must be channeled and directed in a positive way. Institutional processes causing careerist attitudes require considerable changes. These changes redefine the responsibilities of commanders and greatly impact the way the Air Force Military Personnel Center (AFMPC) conducts business.

### The Solution

In response to the careerism problem, the Air Force leadership saw a need to redirect officer attitudes and Air Force personnel programs. This redirection was the birth of the OPD program. General Welch's charge for redirection led to the following definition of OPD:

Those actions and experiences that enhance an officer's ability to perform his or her job and thereby contribute to the mission of the Air Force as the level of responsibility increases. It begins with concentration on primary job expertise, broadens through the career at different rates for different officers, and culminates in a generalist with both depth and breadth of experience. This growth pattern is produced by a well-balanced combination of career area professional expertise, leadership, and management skills. (33:8)

General Welch directed the OPD philosophy reflect two central themes. The first is that job performance is the key to success as a professional officer and to advancement in the Air Force. Second, the chain of command must be intimately involved in personnel decisions affecting individual officers. (38) As General Welch stated, "You've got to get the chain of command in the process. We're really talking the wing commander and squadron commander." (7:12) Although current job performance should be an officer's number one concern and command involvement is necessary throughout the process, there are four other principles laying the foundation for a successful OPD program. These principles include the requirements to combine leadership, career area, and management expertise; to balance the

right developmental emphasis at the right time; to redirect professional development in an evolutionary fashion; and to place more importance on an officer's quality of work. (12)

The objectives of OPD are to increase the officers' competence in performing their current job, to prepare the officers for future opportunities, and to ensure the best qualified officers are promoted and gain increased responsibility. (32:6)

#### Officer Professional Development Phase Points

Inasmuch as OPD is a developmental process, it must be pursued incrementally across five time-phased categories within the officer corps: precommissioning, newly commissioned officers (second lieutenants), company grade officers, field grade officers, and colonels (See Appendix F). Individuals participating in precommissioning programs and newly commissioned officers need to concentrate on officership. Officership means giving one's best, 100 percent of the time. (21) Young officers demonstrate officership through their outlook towards the Air Force as a profession. A true professional not only gives 100 percent, but exhibits leadership, patriotism, and integrity. Leaders of today cannot expect to see such qualities in every second lieutenant. It is the squadron commander's responsibility to cultivate these qualities and guide their growth.

Company grade officers must concentrate on depth development in officership and in their Air Force specialty. General Welch defines depth as a "means of developing the knowledge and skills necessary to perform in one's primary career area at his or her best." (22) After developing sufficient depth, an officer can begin to add breadth.

When officers reach field grade, they continue to develop depth, but should also begin to add breadth through career-broadening assignments in staff and joint duty positions. (23)

At the colonel level, the officer concentrates on expanding breadth of knowledge and experience to plan for and to employ combat forces. Regardless of the professional developmental pattern,

an officer's number one concern should be job performance and what that job is depends totally on what the Air Force needs an officer to do at a given time in his or her career--not what the individual needs to do to get promoted. (22:2)

#### Education and Training

Under OPD, professional military education (PME), academic education, and military training continue to be important to an officer's professional development. All education programs must be completed at the appropriate time to achieve maximum benefit for the Air Force and the officer. Education programs should parallel the same professional development track as the assignment process, develop-

ing first depth then breadth. This education and training process impacts precommissioning programs, lieutenant education, PME, advanced academic degrees, and Air Force training programs.

#### Precommissioning Education Programs

Precommissioning programs form the foundation for the proper officer mindset. To improve our precommissioning programs, OPD seeks to change recruiting efforts and revise and standardize curricula in the Officer Training School, Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, and the Air Force Academy. Recruiting efforts must stress what the individual can offer the Air Force, not what the Air Force can offer the individual. Recruiting should be based on a person's propensity to serve the Air Force as an officer, not just on academic grades and degrees. (2)

After an individual is recruited to attend a precommissioning program, emphasis must be on officership. Within officership, the focus is on those behavioral traits which support the profession of arms. The individual must realize the Air Force is a profession, not a job. Curricula should concentrate on military history, officer values, leadership, teamwork, communication, and officer responsibilities. Subjects which contribute to careerism, such as promotion past captain and selection to colonel as the criteria for a successful career, must be removed. Precommissioning



programs must be honest in communicating the demands of a military profession while focusing on officership.

Through OPD, the Air Force now realizes it must start early to mold our officers into a professional force. Only through leadership by example and education will the Air Force develop committed officers with realistic expectations. The squadron commander must exhibit leadership for squadron members to emulate and must strive to influence positively the mindset of the younger officers. If the correct foundation is laid, the Air Force can build upon these positive experiences and develop an even more professional officer corps.

#### Lieutenant Education

Newly commissioned second lieutenants transitioning into active duty service in the Air Force must receive positive experiences in their first year of active service. To support this transition, an educational program is in the developmental stage to ensure lieutenants maintain positive attitudes and receive motivating experiences. The program is the responsibility of each MAJCOM. Course curricula could include subject areas such as officership, leadership, followership, Project Warrior, officer-enlisted relations, communications, military customs and courtesies, and the MAJCOM and Air Force missions. The program timing should be after initial specialty training. Currently, the Air

University Center for Professional Development offers a 25-hour seminar course designed to be taught at the wing level by wing personnel. (36:4-36) Every MAJCOM is responsible to tailor the course to its specific mission with the end product a professional young officer corps. Motivating each newly commissioned officer is essential to the success of the wing's mission and future retention efforts. Second lieutenant education programs must receive support from the wing and squadron commander. This support must be reflected by positive actions, not by "lip service."

#### Professional Military Education

Professional military education has a very important role in OPD. Although this paper only addresses Air Force schools, it is important to realize Air Force officers are eligible to attend sister service schools, National Defense University schools, and foreign schools listed in AFR 35-8, USAF Officer Professional Military Education System. A common misconception is that OPD deemphasizes PME. In fact, OPD stresses PME, but at the right time: Squadron Officer School (SOS) for captains, Air Command and Staff College (ACSC) for majors, and Air War College (AWC) for lieutenant colonels and colonels. A review of SOS, ACSC, and all senior service schools (SSS) resulted in changes to the selection process, length of courses, and curricula content.

With respect to the SOS selection process, only 54 percent of eligible active duty officers (two to seven years of active duty service) attended prior to 1989. The long-term goal is for 100 percent attendance. Intermediate steps taken to meet this goal have been a reduction in course length from eight and one-half weeks to seven weeks, and a change in the attendance criteria to captains with more than four years and less than seven years total active federal commissioned service. As a result of this change, 4,800 captains will attend SOS in 1989. (18) A final step to meeting the 100 percent attendance goal for captains is to reduce SOS to six weeks. Another alternative, not contemplated at this time, is to increase class size. (3)

Before the Air Force implements a six-week course, Air University must make a careful evaluation of the curriculum, focusing on leadership and communication skills. If the course content is in any way degraded through a reduction in course length, it is better to maintain SOS at seven weeks and reduce the attendance goal below 100 percent. Reducing the attendance goal is a more reasonable alternative in light of mission deferrals from school, of the retention outlook, and of the questionable performance of a few officers.

ACSC will undergo the greatest change of all the Air Force PME institutions. The changes will occur in course duration, attendance opportunity, candidate selection, and

curriculum content. To increase residence opportunity from about 20 percent to 30 percent, ACSC will undergo a reduction from 10 months to 24 weeks (two classes per year) in academic year 1991. (12) Major commands have become the responsible agents for selecting ACSC candidates. No longer is candidate selection tied to an order of merit from the majors' promotion board. (9:3,77) Wing commanders and squadron commanders are given increased responsibility in forming the candidate pool. The major commands will now evaluate their majors with less than three years time in grade and will nominate their officers to a central school designation board to make the final school assignments. In the area of the curriculum, ACSC courses will be more closely aligned with the title of the school stressing such areas as command and staff related academics. Shifts in curriculum emphasize effective resource management and leadership. In addition to staff skills, ACSC will also stress warfighting at the operational level. Thus we see a building block approach to the PME curriculum. First, in SOS, there is the officership, leadership, and communication development process. Then, through ACSC, the officer draws from the SOS experience and applies knowledge at the operational level.

The ACSC initiatives are positive changes for the Air Force. The reduction in the school length seems

appropriate. After all, the Armed Forces Staff College is known as a credible intermediate service school and is only six months long. Giving more majors the opportunity to expand their professional knowledge is consistent with the OPD principles of depth, then breadth. In the final analysis, ACSC will be less elitist and will cultivate more young minds to compete for future senior leadership positions.

AWC is also affected by OPD through a change in selection criteria similar to ACSC. Again, squadron and wing commanders are active participants in the nomination process. Lieutenant colonel nominations for SSS are no longer tied to the lieutenant colonel promotion list, but are sent by the MAJCOM to an AFMPC central designation board.

The selection of colonels to attend SSS remains unchanged. If a colonel was previously promoted below-the-promotion zone to major, lieutenant colonel, or colonel, he or she meets the SSS designation board for assignment to a specific school. Colonel selection for SSS is an area where OPD could take one further step. For example, a colonel by virtue of a previous early promotion to major may not be the best candidate for SSS. Therefore, MAJCOMs should have the opportunity to nominate selected on-time colonels who are outperforming their contemporaries for SSS.

Although OPD has positively affected the Air Force's PME programs, two other projects were undertaken in conjunction with OPD: The Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense (DOD) Reorganization Act of 1986 and the Panel on Military Education of the House Armed Services Committee (Skelton Commission). Both of these projects impact officers' career paths and educational opportunities.

#### DOD Reorganization Act of 1986

Title IV of the DOD Reorganization Act states:

The Secretary of Defense shall require that each Department of Defense school concerned with professional military education periodically review and revise its curriculum for senior and intermediate grade officers in order to strengthen the focus on first, joint matters; and second, preparing officers for joint duty assignments. (24:38)

This act directed a joint track in AWC and ACSC for a limited number of officers, and the recognition of National War College (NWC), the Industrial College of the Armed Forces, and Armed Forces Staff College (AFSC) as joint schools during academic year 1989. Attendance at a joint PME course and joint experience are requirements for the award of the joint specialty officer (JSO) designation. (19:5)

The DOD Reorganization Act was imposed upon DOD by Congress. Operational impacts concerning tour lengths, promotion consideration, PME selection, JSO designation, and joint positions are very restrictive and limit the flexi-

bility of the Air Force's personnel policies. There is a danger that officers will look upon the JSOs as elitist. There is also an element of "careerism" built into the law. Many officers are concerned they must fill the joint square and attend a joint PME course to become competitive for advancement. Such thinking is contrary to OPD principles.

#### Panel on Military Education

Representative Ike Skelton (Democrat-Missouri) chaired the House Armed Services Committee Panel on Military Education (Skelton Commission). The panel's charter was to assess the ability of the DOD PME system to develop officers competent in both strategy and joint matters. Panel recommendations scheduled for implementation during academic years 1990 and 1991 include the establishment of a two-phased joint specialty officer education process with the service colleges (e.g., AWC and ACSC) responsible for phase I. Phase I is available to all students attending AWC or ACSC. Phase II is to be taught by AFSC on a TDY basis. Phase II is required for graduates of service colleges en route to assignments as joint specialists. The AFSC TDY course is projected to last approximately two months. Two other recommendations were made impacting the Air Force's OPD program. The panel recommended AWC make national military strategy its primary focus and increase other service student and faculty mix. Also, the panel proposed to con-

vert NWC into a National Center for Strategic Studies, thereby elevating NWC and removing the school from the SSS ranks. (25:1-6)

Given that joint assignments will play a greater role in an officer's career, the Skelton Committee's recommendations have merit. There is currently a division among the AWC class between those in the joint track program and those who are not. One may question whether selection to the joint track was a quality cut. In reality, the answer is no, but perceptions lead one to think otherwise. The two-phased approach proposed by the Skelton Committee eliminates this problem. Upon implementation of the new joint program, every student in AWC will receive the same courses and will have the same opportunity to attend a concentrated joint course in Phase II if they are projected to a joint assignment. Officers feel this approach is fair. It also demonstrates good economy of resources. The law requires only 50 percent of those officers in the joint track be assigned to joint duties. The other 50 percent are available for service-specific jobs. In the two-phased program, however, 100 percent of the Phase II graduates go to joint jobs.

#### Advanced Academic Degrees

The OPD program encourages officers to seek graduate degrees to increase the individual's worth to the Air Force



through enhanced duty performance. Emphasis is placed on gaining depth-related degrees as a company grade officer or as a major. (33:9) Achieving a degree must not interfere with job performance and not be considered a square filler, but must contribute to duty performance.

Selection procedures for fully funded degree programs and other sponsored programs will also change under OPD. To ensure only the most qualified officers are considered for degree programs, selections are made from among both nonvolunteers and volunteers. (39) Currently, only volunteers are reviewed for these educational programs.

#### Training Programs

Any program viewed as placing emphasis on "careerism," perceived as "elitist," or considered necessary for the "fast track" is eliminated under OPD. As a result, the Air Staff Training Program, Joint Chief of Staff Intern Program, and MAJCOM Spotlight programs will be deleted by the end of 1989. (30) Such programs interfere with the depth development of our company grade officers.

#### Officer Evaluation System

The Officer Evaluation System (OES) is the cornerstone of the OPD program. The OES complements OPD by focusing on the most important factor to both the officer and the Air Force--PERFORMANCE! (37:3) Throughout the years, numerous evaluation systems, because of inflation in

performance reporting, have failed to provide promotion boards the means to differentiate among officers to determine who are best qualified for promotion. In addition, past evaluation systems provided neither viable feedback to the officer being evaluated nor personalized counseling.

(41) To solve the inflationary trends, to provide helpful guidance to Air Force officers, and, most importantly, to place performance back into its proper place, the revised OES stresses three elements--performance feedback, performance report, and promotion recommendation. (31:4)

Performance feedback provides commanders and supervisors the opportunity to help officers improve duty performance and encourage professional growth. Feedback has two basic functions, information and motivation. (37:3,5) Performance feedback is required semiannually for all company grade officers and is accomplished on an AF Form 724.

The Officer Performance Report (AF Form 707B for company grades and AF Form 707A for field grades) provides an assessment of job performance. The form is used for promotion, school selection, assignments, and separation. (37:17) An officer receives a report annually unless the officer does not have two reports on file, in which case he or she will receive a report semiannually.

The Promotion Recommendation Form (PRF--AF Form 709) was developed to assist promotion boards in selecting officers who are best qualified for promotion. This form is

used to communicate a promotion recommendation from the senior rater to a central selection board. No earlier than 60 days prior to the promotion board, the senior officer completes a PRF and makes one of three promotion recommendations: "Definitely Promote," "Promote," or "Do Not Promote this Board." The following allocation rates determine the number of "Definitely Promote" recommendations based on the promotion opportunity for each grade: (31:3,8)

#### DEFINITELY PROMOTE ALLOCATIONS

GRADE TO	A/IPZ	BPZ	PROMOTION OPPORTUNITY
Captain	90%	N/A	97.5%
Major	65%	10%	90.0%
Lt Col	45%	10%	75.0%
Colonel	25%	15%	55.0%

The above promotion allocations are necessary for two reasons. First, the Air Force cannot promote everyone, and the OES provides a discriminator to the promotion board. Second, without restrictions on "definitely promote" recommendations, inflation will creep back into the system.

The OES formed the basis to implement the Air Force OPD philosophy. With the emphasis on performance in the OES, the Air Force OPD program emphasizes depth of performance for the lower grades, followed by breadth of performance for field graders. The OPD philosophy, to include the OES, is written in AFR 36-23, Officer Professional Develop-

ment. This regulation goes much further in describing the commander's responsibility in the assignment process.

The squadron commander and wing commander must thoroughly understand the OES process, "buy into," and sell the program to the younger officers in the squadron. It is easy to sell a program that is credible, opens communication channels, and reduces inflation. Only through an honest commitment to the process will the Air Force realize a truly effective rating system. The answer is the new OES.

#### Assignment System

Direct squadron commander involvement is now integral to assignment actions which in the past were accomplished mostly by the AFMPC. (7:3) Assignment actions discussed in this section present the following topics: AFR 36-23, join spouse assignments, by-name requests, deferred officers, and the revamped 7-Day Option provisions.

#### AFR 36-23: Officer Professional Development

On 1 January 1989, the title of AFR 36-23 changed from Officer Career Development to Officer Professional Development reflecting the current Air Force philosophy. Not only does AFR 36-23 focus on OPD philosophy, but it also formalizes the commander's involvement program and introduces the new AF Form 90, Officer Assignment Worksheet. Air Force philosophy as stated in AFR 36-23 and practiced in the assignment system is that "officers volunteer one time, when

they take the oath of office." (33:9) Such philosophy encourages performance in the current job.

The OPD program recognizes that the squadron commander is in the best position to view the officer's performance and to know the officer's abilities. Moreover, the commander can compare the officer's performance and abilities to the needs of the Air Force. (41) Clearly, under OPD redirection, the squadron commander becomes more directly involved in the assignment process.

To reinforce the commander's involvement in the assignment process, commanders or supervisors are now required to provide written input to the revised AF Form 90. It is highly recommended the squadron commander assume the AF Form 90 responsibilities. The squadron commander not only has the experience required for proper counseling but is the individual accountable for the well-being of the squadron's people. The new AF Form 90 also emphasizes the officer's next assignment only, not a long-term career path. (20)

The new form has three sections. (6:3) The first section, completed by the officer, includes standard identification information. The squadron commander completes a counseling and feedback session in conjunction with Section II. During this session, the officer can gain insight into filling out assignment preferences for the next assignment through the commander's experience, knowledge,

and guidance. The commander is responsible for recommending the specialty and level of an officer's next assignment by completing Part III. The squadron commander is in the best position to compare an officer's performance to the optimum type and level of assignment most appropriate for the individual. Thus, we discover a close tie between the OES and the AF Form 90. The commander must also comment on the unique capabilities of an individual and recommend jobs the officer is most qualified to fill.

The squadron commander must understand the many pitfalls of being involved in the assignment process. First, each officer in the squadron wants the best assignment in a choice location in a modern weapons system. Of course, this is not possible. There are many less desirable assignments. The squadron commander must carefully examine his or her role and only recommend assignments that the officer is best qualified to fill and that are consistent with grade requirements. Second, there are many players in the assignment process. At the wing level, the squadron commander and wing commander are the most active players. The air division or numbered Air Force may also be involved. Moreover, the MAJCOM and AFMPC play a major role. Indeed, MAJCOM and AFMPC have a better view of the overall assignment process than other agencies. They have the advantage of analyzing the entire pilot resource. For example, the squadron commander must understand pilot

assignments are generated by separations, retirements, and overseas rotations. Assignments are generated continually, some good, some bad. The bad ones are hard to work, to understand, and most of all, to relay to the individual. Third, squadron commanders must be active participants in the assignment process and assess the assignments of their people. The commander must stay in contact with the MAJCOM or AFMPC assignment sections asking questions if the assignment does not appear appropriate. Fourth, it is not easy to tell individuals they are going to a northern tier base in a weapons system they do not want. However, Air Force requirements dictate the situation, and at times everyone must "bite the bullet" and ultimately serve the Air Force needs. Conveying such information in a positive manner may be one of the most difficult tasks for the squadron commander. If the assignment notification is done right, two professionals appear, both the squadron commander and the young pilot about to depart PCS.

The new assignment system requires officers to consult with their commanders, provides for written input from commanders, and allows officers to submit the form directly to AFMPC. The revision of AF Form 90 under OPD serves to decentralize further and to personalize each officer's assignment. (11:28)

### Join Spouse Assignments

Join spouse assignments will continue to be worked, but emphasis on professional development becomes more important. The OPD program forces two changes to the join spouse program. First, married couples must receive counseling and understand that assigning both officers to a joint location has potential professional development limitations to one or both careers. (20) Second, the measurement of success of the join spouse program will no longer be the number of couples assigned together. Instead the measure of success is the number of couples whose joint assignments have a positive OPD impact on both officers. Military couples, receiving proper advice and knowing the consequences of assignment to the same locations, can make better decisions concerning their next assignments. The direct role of the squadron commander in the join spouse program is professional counseling.

### By-Name Requests

By-name requests are expected to decline drastically under the OPD format. Now that demonstrated job performance is most important, more officers will have an equally competitive shot at key jobs. (1:26) The important fact to remember is that under OPD it is not who you know but how you perform. The squadron commander must continually stress current duty performance and reward truly outstanding performance. Only through careful discrimination, along

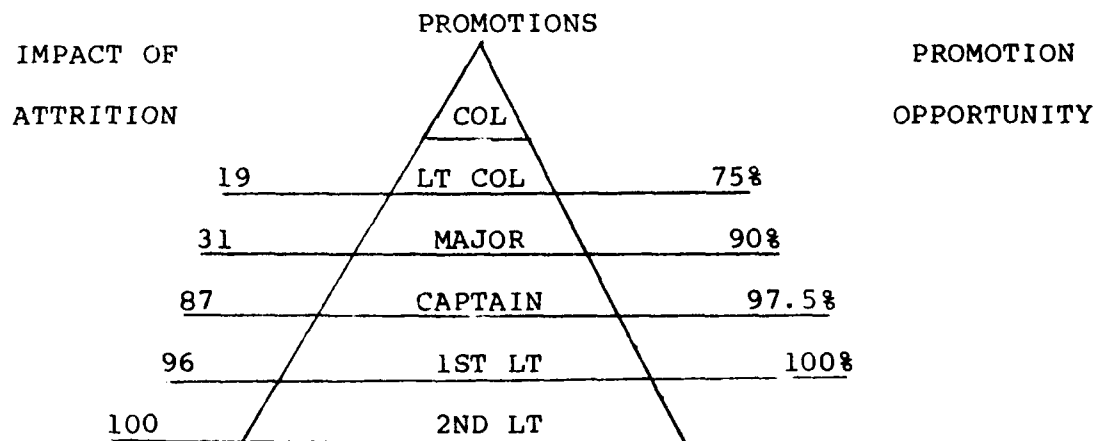


quality lines, and true understanding of OPD from the senior leadership level down through the squadron commander to the individual pilot, will by-name requests be reduced.

#### Use of Deferred Lieutenant Colonels

Promotion to lieutenant colonel marks a successful career in the Air Force. As such, OPD emphasizes better use of lieutenant colonels nonselected for promotion to colonel. Lieutenant General Hickey, HQ AF DCS, Personnel, sent letters to all MAJCOMs "asking their support in helping to place lieutenant colonels who have been nonselected for promotion to colonel into responsible positions where we can best use their talents." (8:3) Accordingly, there is Air Force emphasis to place lieutenant colonels in key jobs on the Air Staff, MAJCOM, or wing-level positions.

Only 19 out of every 100 newly commissioned officers attain the rank of lieutenant colonel. (13) Promotion to lieutenant colonel shows the officer has survived many quality cuts and has proven worthy of quality jobs.



### 7-Day Option

The OPD program significantly impacts the 7-Day Option provisions. Changes to the provisions are intended to meet the needs of both the officers and the Air Force.

(12) Under the new guidelines, an officer cannot apply for separation in lieu of accepting an assignment under the 7-Day Option rules if his or her active duty service commitment date (ADSCD) is later than 12 months from the assignment notification. An officer whose ADSCD is earlier than 12 months from assignment notification and who declines the assignment will have his or her separation date set by AFMPC. (5:10) The AFMPC will set the separation date within a 12-month period depending on Air Force needs, the critical manning posture of the officer's specialty, and the officer's desires. The redirection of OPD gives control back to the Air Force in managing the 7-Day Option program. Squadron commanders must understand this program and advise their officers upon assignment notification of the different assignment options. An open dialogue between the squadron commanders and their troops is important. If young pilots know they will not be taken off flying status upon a request of separation, there will be more open communications. More open communications will enhance the squadron commander's understanding of the individual's career intentions. Moreover, the commander will receive word of changes in the

organization sooner in order to project better the future manning posture of the squadron.

#### Force Structuring

A final area of concern to squadron commanders is the positive impact of OPD on force structuring. Changes implemented through OPD offer the Air Force more effective force management actions by adjusting size and makeup of the active duty force, impacting critical points in the officer's career cycle. New OPD changes include rearranging the phase points for appointment to Regular status, giving an ADSCD for promotion to captain, reducing the eligibility requirement for below-the-promotion zone, introducing a new officer separation feedback program, and implementing the Selective Early Retirement provisions. An OPD area also under study is promotion board timing and pin-on.

#### Regular Appointment

A new Regular appointment system went into effect in 1989. The new system will improve force structuring capability and will enhance retention efforts. In the past, Regular appointment boards occurred at an officer's four- (in conjunction with the captains promotion board), five-, and seven-year points. (29:3) There were three shortcomings to this system. First, the board at the four-year point occurred at a critical retention point. Second, the limit of 50 percent to augmentation rates sent the wrong

signals to our young officer force by telling them "you are good enough to make captain, but 50 percent of you are not good enough to be augmented." Third, an officer, at the four-year point, had too few performance reports by which to be evaluated fairly. (4:3,77)

One board, conducted at the seven-year point, replaces the three-board system. Augmentation rates will also increase from the 50 percent rate to as yet an undetermined level. Regular Air Force appointments are now offered at varying rates in four different categories: pilot, navigator, nonrated operations, and mission support. (12) Under the new system, rates are based on requirements. Therefore, when pilot retention is low, the augmentation rates are high. Those officers not selected at the seven-year point will separate or be placed in a Conditional Reserve Status, depending upon requirements, until meeting the majors promotion board.

The Regular appointment system is not easy for the squadron commander to understand. The bottom line of the new Regular appointment system is that an officer's career decision is now delayed until the seven-year point. This is more appropriate, especially for a pilot, because selection for Regular appointment occurs at a time more closely aligned with the expiration of a pilot's first active duty service commitment and at a time he or she is making a bonus decision. The squadron commander must take an active

counseling role at this critical juncture in a young pilot's career. Improved retention rates could result from proactive personal squadron commander involvement.

#### Active Duty Service Commitment

Is there an active duty service commitment for all promotions? The answer was no. Two-year commitments have always existed for majors, lieutenant colonels, and colonels. (27:2) However, prior to OPD, no commitment existed for captains. In the past, an individual selected for captain could separate immediately upon pin-on. In fact, 200 newly pinned-on captains separated in 1987. (4:3) The OPD program levies a one-year commitment to give more meaning to promotion to captain. Perhaps more importantly, the Air Force receives added stability, and the officer corps gains in experience.

#### Below-The-Promotion Zone (BPZ)

Depth development for company grade officers is a major premise of OPD. To ensure officers do not concentrate on square-filling to obtain a perceived fast track and to ensure greater depth development, BPZ consideration to major will begin two years before primary-zone consideration, beginning in 1989. Reducing the time frame from three to two years standardizes the BPZ considerations for all field grade ranks. (34:9)

### Officer Separations

Squadron commanders now play an active role in officer separation feedback. In the past, the Air Force depended on two surveys: the "New Directions Survey" and "Careers Survey." Neither survey allowed comments from the supervisor or commander.

The revised separation feedback system will require both the member and squadron commander to provide feedback as to the reason for an officer's separation. An officer who separates will be required to have a face-to-face meeting with his or her supervisor or commander to discuss the individual's reason for leaving. After the counseling session and as a part of separation processing, both the commander and the separating officer will complete a separation survey. (12) This revised survey system under OPD accomplishes two important actions. First, the counseling session provides the commander immediate information as to the reasons the officer is separating. The commander can use this information to change perceptions, to correct problem areas, and to educate the remaining officers. The second recipient of the survey is AFMPC. At AFMPC, the surveys will be merged and feedback will be provided to commanders Air Force wide. The overall goal of the feedback is to see what the Air Force is doing right, what it is doing wrong, and what external or internal factors the Air Force can affect to improve retention of

young pilots at the end of their initial commitment and of experienced officers between their 7- and 14-year point.

#### Selective Early Retirement

Under DOPMA, provisions exist to conduct a Selective Early Retirement Board (SERB) to retire up to 30 percent of lieutenant colonels twice passed over to colonel, or colonels with more than four years time in grade. (26) A SERB was conducted in November 1988. The SERB is important to obtain the proper force levels and to uphold the premise of OPD, performance. The SERB in November 1988 chose only to look at lieutenant colonels nonselected to colonel three times and colonels with five years or greater time in grade. A SERB can be used anytime for the purpose of managing officer grade imbalances or strength overages; however, a board can only look at the same individual once in a five-year period.

It is important to stress the positive aspects of a SERB. Selective early retirement provisions ensure retirement-eligible officers continue performance at the highest levels. Phase points for promotion to lieutenant colonel and colonel are decreased by retiring senior level officers. In the past, the Air Force was unable to provide a proper force structuring through the adjustment of accession levels. Therefore, a SERB provides more stability to accessions and allows more efficient management of the offi-

cer life cycle. In the final analysis, the SERB is an important part of OPD stressing professional development and job performance throughout the officer career cycle.

The squadron commander must ensure the young pilots do not look at the SERB in a negative light. They must understand the SERB is a force management tool used to ensure a balanced force. The SERB will reduce senior officer strength allowing for more upward mobility and vitality in the total officer force.

#### Promotion Timing

Large year groups, formed by increased accession levels during the Vietnam era, have resulted in an increased number of promotions especially at the field grade levels. The end product is a force experiencing long waiting periods from promotion selection to pin-on. Waiting time can now take longer than two years. There are three options to remedy this situation: change eligibility criteria, adjust promotion opportunity, or change board timing.

In the interest of force structure and retention, the Air Force believes promotion opportunity should remain constant and the board timing should be changed to accommodate a maximum of one-year wait to pin-on. Therefore, the area attracting the greatest focus is eligibility. To maintain promotion opportunity and minimum wait to pin-



on, it becomes necessary to change the eligibility criteria for promotion above captain. No longer can the Air Force depend on promoting by year groups. (4:77) It becomes necessary, then, to promote to requirements, based on needed strength levels within grade. By promoting to requirements we mean to look at the desired strength levels and adjust date-of-rank eligibility to meet desired promotion numbers. Promoting to requirements vice year groups results in pin-ons beginning soon after release of the promotion list, shorter waits to pin-on (hopefully within one year), a degree of board regularity (annually), and a stable promotion opportunity.

The squadron commander will hear many complaints concerning the long wait to pin-ons. It is important to understand the dynamics of the promotion process and know that force levels within grade are constrained by law. Involvement of the squadron commander also occurs in assessing an individual's record based on dates of rank and year groups. The perception is that one can determine if an officer is BPZ or a "pass-over" by looking at the year group. This assumption is not true. The only true measure is comparing dates of rank from captain through lieutenant colonel. The squadron commander must be careful not to label an individual as early or late based on year groups. The key now is current duty performance.

### Chapter Conclusion

The OPD program is a positive step in meeting future Air Force challenges. We now see a redirection from "career management" to "professional development." This innovative OPD program impacts the officer life cycle, the individual officer, all commanders and supervisors, and the institutional framework of the Air Force. The program affects the basic philosophy of Air Force people programs and is seen as an active ingredient for change in the areas of education and training, evaluation, assignments, and force structuring. A comparison of differences between past career management actions and present OPD program actions is found in Appendix F. Job performance is the key word in OPD.

At the core of OPD are the commanders and supervisors and their communication channels opened through the program. Doing the right thing at the right time gains more emphasis under OPD. First, developing depth and then breadth drives home this point. The OPD program emphasizes the squadron commander's role is to motivate officers, provide expert counsel, listen intently, and provide personal feedback to the individual officer and the Air Force. A motivated officer giving 100 percent effort in job performance is a must. The end result is a professional officer force with a greater commitment to the Air Force mission and

a greater confidence in the competitive but fair nature of the assignment, evaluation, and promotion systems.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY

The Chief of Staff emphasizes the vital and expanding role of the squadron commander during the current Air Force personnel turbulence and crisis-level decline in retention. In this study, we have concentrated on this expanding role by focusing on the squadron commander selection process, retention, spousal issues, and the Officer Professional Development program.

Proper selection and development of the squadron commander are the keys to a successful Air Force. The squadron commander selection programs for each MAJCOM are working well. We need to publicize this fact and continue to improve upon the process. Leadership development for officers selected for command needs to be continually scrutinized to ensure the best training available for these future senior Air Force leaders.

With respect to retention, the squadron commander will always have a challenge. There will always be retention issues in the Air Force or any other military service. Such a process is not all bad. Those who have honorably served their commitments do not "owe" the Air Force additional service. Moreover, the natural weeding out of those who do not want the rigors and sacrifice of the

military profession is good, for it helps ensure a quality Air Force. When external employment opportunities become overly competitive with the attraction of the Air Force, however, then retention can turn for the worse. Such is the case with the current airline hiring practices.

Clearly, the airlines have offered Air Force pilots alternative careerism. The pull of the airlines is overwhelming to many pilots who seek more money and a different lifestyle than the military one. This pull from the airlines is leveraged by deepening perceptions that Congress is reneging on its promises of pay, benefits, and professional recognition. Moreover, many pilots see the Air Force as faltering in its attempt to ensure family security and mission-oriented working conditions. Add to that the insult of the pilot bonus, and the stage is set for severe retention problems within the pilot force. The retention challenge to the squadron commander is the requirement to defuse many of the irritants confronting the young pilot today while promoting a sense of professional service which transcends the draw of money and of a materialistic lifestyle.

Spousal and family issues need to be addressed consistently and uniformly by all levels of command. Young officers are skeptical of "solutions" that receive headlines for two weeks in the Air Force Times then fade into obscurity. They are looking for results in action.

The consistent and uniform action required is a responsibility of each commander, but today's busy commander needs assistance from the top down. Official communication of policy should be clearer, more timely, and more readily available than an unofficial Air Force Times.

The Officer Professional Development program is a most positive step to improving the professionalism of the officer corps by instilling a greater commitment to the Air Force mission. Under the program, demands on squadron commanders are high, but the rewards are great. Squadron commanders now have a greater opportunity for direct involvement in educating their young officers, evaluating their performance, and providing expert counsel in the assignment process. The demands require squadron commanders to show a personal commitment to the Air Force mission and the people under their command. The Officer Professional Development program provides a new philosophy and the tools necessary to assist squadron commanders in accomplishing their responsibilities and in building a committed professional flying squadron.

CHAPTER VII  
RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Each MAJCOM publicize its respective squadron commander selection process.
2. Each MAJCOM establish the squadron commander tenure as two years.
3. Senior Air Force leadership emphasize down the chain of command that the squadron commander is key. Wing commanders need to ensure the squadron commanders are communicating to their respective squadrons, both good and bad news.
4. Consolidate all MAJCOM squadron commanders' handbooks and develop a generic commander's handbook for use Air Force wide. The handbook should be reviewed annually and updated accordingly.
5. Develop and distribute to all squadron commanders a list of documents pertaining to squadron commander issues. This list and appropriate documents need to be distributed when changed.
6. Discuss with the airline industry the feasibility of changing its hiring practices to guarantee the integrity of the nation's military pilot force. Such a change would need

to ensure the military forces have a required inventory of pilots for a given period of time to meet mission needs. At the end of military service, the airlines would guarantee the separating pilots employment and retirement compensation.

7. Reevaluate the criteria for selecting officer candidates. Is the Air Force wanting too much or the wrong things in its officer corps?

8. Review precommissioning programs to determine if the Air Force is educating and training officer candidates properly. The Marine Corps is not having a pilot retention problem. Are the Marines doing something the Air Force should be doing?

9. Continue to publicize Air Force senior leadership emphasis on the strict enforcement of policies in AFR 30-51.

10. Squadron commanders understand the Blue Ribbon Panel Report and, keeping those issues in mind, exercise creative leadership in preserving the Air Force's traditional support for its members and families without dependence on the traditional role of spouses.

11. Stronger Air Force support for a quick return to military pay "comparability" as a sign of support for our military families.



12. Educate the officer corps better on the assignment process.
13. Continue to publicize and implement the Officer Professional Development program.
14. Ensure the Officer Evaluation System remains a long-term program.
15. Emphasize the Officer Newsletter to publicize personnel programs.
16. Continue to emphasize the commander's involvement program under AFR 36-23, Officer Professional Development.

APPENDIX A  
SQUADRON COMMANDER ISSUES

The following comments were received during nine interview sessions with 100 students from Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College. All personnel interviewed were rated officers. All Air War College students were former flying squadron commanders. The comments approximate actual interview responses during an open forum concerning the expanding role of the squadron commander. During each session, the students were asked to comment on the squadron commander selection process and performance, the number one retention issue, voice their opinions on spousal and family issues, and express their view of the Officer Professional Development program.

The following comments concern the squadron commander selection process and squadron commander performance:

Squadron Officer School

(From the captains' perspectives)

--Quality of squadron commander is the reason pilots stay in or leave the Air Force. They make the job easier or harder.

--The squadron commander tour should be set at two years to properly develop the team.

--The squadron commander is the person who should stand up for you.

--The squadron commander position is seen as a culminating assignment. Nothing higher is needed to be a "success."

--The squadron commander involvement program is great. He helped work my follow-on assignment.

--Impressed with wing and squadron commander. They fly with us, go to the club with us, and make a decision to separate a tough one. You can be honest with these guys.

--The good squadron commanders were giving feedback to their pilots before the requirement through the OES.

--The best job in the Air Force. A "people" commander.

--Should be necessary step before promotion to colonel.

--See squadron commander as a square-filler.

--Concern for safety. Some squadron commanders come straight from the Pentagon and are not as qualified to fly as someone who has been flying the line.

--Squadron commanders pull touch-and-go assignments. Comes from the Pentagon, puts in his 12 months, and then off he goes.

--Perceived "uncaring" leadership.

#### Air Command and Staff College

(From the majors' perspectives)

--Squadron commander must be the strategic planner--let the adjutant do the busy work.

--Squadron commander must be qualified, interested, and care for people.

--A good squadron commander is at the 20-year point, has the squadron ready for war, and is selected for colonel.

--Learn from industry for squadron commander selection. Should not select based on paper. Pull out of squadron environment, interview, and make selection.

--Values are important--Should recruit a guy from Auburn off a John Deere tractor rather than an electrical engineer from Harvard. (Editor's note: This statement was made in the

context that the Air Force is perhaps hiring over-educated people.)

--Need a psychological test for selection to squadron commander.

--The good squadron commander makes the difference. They tell you what to expect and how you are doing.

--Assess leadership and warrior qualities before squadron commander selection.

--Use subordinate review in selection process--not a veto, just an input.

--Ask the question, "Would you want to go to combat with this guy?"

--The squadron commander was the main reason for pulling my DOS. I received support, and I made it to ACSC.

--Good squadron commander watches out for his troops and will stand up to the DO. He must be honestly concerned for his troops.

--Best squadron commander is a role model.

--Must be consistent, straightforward, establish direction, and relate to people.

--Not asking enough questions on potential in selecting our squadron commanders.

-- The ops officer should be training to become a squadron commander. As a general rule, the squadron commander does not take on this training role.

--Need an institutionalized process and attend the squadron commander's course early.

--Squadron commander must stress discipline.

--Squadron commander must know when to say "time out." People can only do so much.

--Squadron commanders must know all of the people, up and down the chain of command.

--Being a squadron commander is pay in itself.

--Do not select squadron commander from a Pentagon job, on a touch-and-go, and only to make colonel.

--On paper good, in reality, bad. The record does not always reflect the potential to perform as a squadron commander.

--Squadron commanders now do not have combat experience making leadership difficult.

--Squadron commander process too secretive.

--Too many squadron commanders coming from exec jobs, have low flying hours, and questionable credibility.

--Need more than good squadron commander. Ops officer and wing commander are also part of the team.

--Squadron commanders are more concerned with own career, more so than mission.

--Today's leaders aren't taking the initiative.

--My motivation was good when reporting-in, but heard the following, "Your hair is too short, your boots are too shiny, and my name is Bill," from the flight commander.

--A lot of "Bubbaism" in the squadron commander selection process.

--The perception is that you must be a BPZ to be a squadron commander.

--Not aware of squadron commanders list or criteria for selection.

--No grooming for squadron commander. Process appears to be trial and error.

--Many squadron commanders are well rounded, but can't fly. They are good managers, but are bad leaders. This is a result of officers moving from job to job, aircraft to aircraft, and flying to staff.

--A cancer that spreads through the Air Force is a squadron commander who is a good staff officer, but is not versed in flying proficiency.

--Rarely see squadron commander or ops officer come from same weapon system; usually from staff--too many years out of the cockpit.

--Perception is that you are merely a hard worker and when things go wrong you'll be fired. However, if you are a golden boy, no problem.

--A squadron commander needs to take care of his people; give him more admin help so he can spend his time leading.

--A commander who cares for his people is #1. A guy merely covering his six is bad news.

### Air War College

(From lieutenant colonels' and colonels' perspectives)

--Young fighter pilots see senior leaders as hypocritical. They see their bosses talk about people issues and then their bosses ask them to do menial tasks (for example, reblueing the squadron; you can't get equipment for the airplanes, but you can get the paint to paint the hangar.

--The young pilot sees the squadron commander going to meetings, working late on paperwork, then getting hit by an IG. They also see the wing commander getting fired. . . thus a frustration that they do not want to experience.

--Young guys see the squadron commander billet as an undesirable position. It's a bad stop on the way to becoming a DO or wing vice commander.

--Dues are too high to become a squadron commander. Cost benefit versus reward?

--Air Force leaders do not have enough clout to make changes in Congress.

--Young pilots look to their squadron commander and their wing commander, not to the Chief of Staff to solve their problems.

--You'll get more negative reactions than positive if you publish the squadron commanders list.

--The guy PCSing from the Pentagon to a flying unit has worked hard to become a squadron commander. However, the guy is expected to requalify in the weapon system prior to assuming command.

--The squadron commander square is definitely looked at for promotion purposes.

--It is not surprising that squadron commanders get selected for colonel because of the screening process to become squadron commander.

--There is a perception that the job of squadron commander is a ticket-punching position for promotion.

--Many squadron commanders are BPZ and continue to expect to get BPZ promotions.

--Logical path is ops officer to squadron commander.

--A squadron commander should stay in the position for two years. There is nothing wrong with leaving a colonel select as a squadron commander to fulfill the two-year requirement.

--There is no value in publishing a squadron commanders list. However, the criteria should be published. What does the Air Force expect of a young guy who aspires to command?

--The squadron commander should be the assignment broker. There are too many pilots who do not trust MPC, and too many squadron commanders who get wrapped up in day-to-day activities and don't worry about their people.

APPENDIX B  
RETENTION ISSUES

The following comments were received during nine interview sessions with 100 students from Squadron Officer School, Air Command Staff College, and Air War College. All personnel interviewed were rated officers. All Air War College students were previous flying squadron commanders. The comments approximate actual interview responses during an open forum concerning the expanding role of the squadron commander. During each session, the students were asked to comment on the squadron commander selection process and performance, the number one retention issue, voice their opinions on spousal and family issues, and express their view of the Officer Professional Development program.

The following comments concern retention issues: the bonus, airline hiring, Guard and Reserve opportunities, working conditions, and Air Force recruitment, changing attitudes, and perceptions.

Bonus

Squadron Officer School

(From the captains' perspectives)

--Bonus as an incentive backfires 100 percent. Not enough money to change one's mind. Does everyone have a price? Amount is a demotivator. Bonus in itself is a demotivator. Appears mercenary. Bonus forces a decision too early and too long--eliminates options.



--Bonus made my decision to stay-in, despite wife's desire to separate. Why am I worth less at 14 years than at 8 years?

--Bonus creates a pay cut at the 14-year point. Must manage money well to survive at 14 years.

--Bonus not a factor, only creates a mercenary force. Afraid of the comment, "If you receive a bonus, I don't want to hear complaints."

--Camaraderie and mission identity are what counts. The bonus is way down the line.

--Dollars up front instead of annual installments would be more of an incentive. "How do I know Congress will not renege on their contract after I commit for seven years?"

--Without the subject of the bonus, I would have never even thought about getting out.

--In the helicopter business, flying is fun and can't duplicate the experience in the civilian world--but the bonus made separation an alternative.

--Money is a demotivator?

--People who already have other commitments are eligible for the bonus.

--Bonus is quick fix only. Real problem is insensitivity from MPC and long working hours.

--You would think the Air Force would learn from history. It is only concerned when retention is bad.

--Will the good assignment go to the nonbonus pilot as an incentive to stay in?

--The bonus causes dissension among the crew.

--"No to bonus, it's better to increase ACIP."

--Only works for guys who are going to stay in anyway.

--See bonus impacting internal squadron flying assignments. Also see bonus affecting assignment policy. Who gets the bad assignments? Those who are already committed by accepting the bonus?

--Bonus may change the mind of the fence sitters.

--From an aircraft commander to a bonus pilot: "If you want to change the TACAN channel, it will cost you \$500."

--It's an insult to receive a jacket or bonus for the purpose of retention.

--"Donuts \$.35--Donuts for Bonus Pilots \$.55." (A sign in the snack bar.)

--"Nothing torques me off more than this bonus."

--Nobody likes the bonus. The only ones taking it are the ones staying in anyway.

#### Air Command and Staff College

(From the majors' perspectives)

--The helicopter issue: "Why should a glider pilot at the Air Force Academy get the bonus while the Pave Low helicopter pilot doesn't?"

--We lose battle early (AFROTC and USAFA) to think of bonus as an incentive. Commissioning programs must convey realistic expectations and teach officership.

--Bonus will only work on the margin.

--See no incentive for retirement. Take \$80,000 at the end of 14 years and separate.

--"Can't buy loyalty--it must be a peacetime Air Force."

--Bonus is only a symptom. How do you treat the disease? Look at alert and family separation. Why can't you fly while on alert? Must go back to basics: motivate through interest and love for flying.

--Pilot bonus will fester already bad situation. Not paid according to responsibility. Nothing more than a bribe.

--It's not a bonus issue, it's an airline opportunity issue.

--I'd mail my check back.

--I'll take it, but I don't want anyone to give me a hassle.

--Not an Air Force issue but a Congressional issue.

--Money to create a mercenary force.

--You get what you train.

--A captain would earn more than a lieutenant colonel.

--The Vietnam vet is not held in as high esteem as the young bonus pilot.

--Nothing to keep the bonus baby in past 14 years.

--What quality people will stay in past 14 years with a pay cut?

--The squadron commander has a big motivation problem as a result of the bonus.

--The bonus forces a career decision too early. A pilot can't commit to an additional seven years at the seven-year point. Instead of opting to stay in, the bonus might force an earlier decision. If accepted, and the pilot later decides he has made the wrong choice, the Air Force won't get what they paid for.

--Bonus issue is now the #1 dissatisfier.

#### Air War College

(From lieutenant colonels' and colonels' perspectives)

--Bonus is mercenary.

--The Air Force can do anything they want to you if you are a bonus pilot.

--Are the guys the Air Force wants accepting the bonus? We are losing the quality pilots.

--If we are giving the bonus to the pilots who are sitting on the fence, we are placing the focus on the wrong people.

--The bonus is not cultivating officership, but "hired guns."

#### Airline Hiring

##### Squadron Officer School

(From the captains' perspectives)

--With airline hiring, individuals are given an excuse to complain.

--If you don't go to the airlines now, you'll see an unemployed lieutenant colonel at age 42.

--Getting out because of push from irritants and airlines provide the parachute to take the jump.

--Airlines have the jobs and are paying big bucks.

--Study shows you can get out at the 18-year point and join the airlines and still make more money in the long run.

#### Air Command and Staff College

(From the majors' perspectives)

--Don't want to be a glorified bus driver in the airlines.

--It is all in the "pull" factor from the airlines; not the "push" factor from the Air Force.

--Irritants are magnified because of the "pull" from the airlines.

--Thought of going out to the ramp to a civilian airplane at age 55 is not something to look forward to.

--Use airlines as an opportunity to run from the Air Force.

--Tolerance level higher if airlines aren't hiring--lower tolerance when hiring.

--"Pull" from airlines fueled by irritants.

--Must work a deal with the airlines to use hands-off policy for a given number of years, guarantee a job at that point--coalition management.

#### Air War College

(From lieutenant colonels' and colonels' perspectives)

--It's a bandwagon effect: one leader will go to the airlines, and the rest will follow.

--Airline hiring is the main retention issue.

## Guard and Reserve Opportunity

### Squadron Officer School

(From the captains' perspectives)

- Air Guard and Reserve provide cockpit and stability.
- Conversion to F-16 by Guard units is a motivator to get out.
- Fly the Guard and airlines at the same time--what a deal.
- Must fly in the Guard or Reserve to make ends meet the first couple of years in the airline business.
- MPC is the number one reason for people joining the Guard or Reserve. Assignment officers don't keep guarantees and do not relay the true story. Guard and Reserve take care of their people. You don't have to worry about your next assignment.

### Air Command and Staff College

(From the majors' perspectives)

- Reservists from Delta say guys are getting out because of poor mid-level leadership in the Air Force.

### Air War College

(From lieutenant colonels' and colonels' perspectives)

- We tell them that they will fly three out of five tours and then they decided they can do better in the Reserve.
- Opportunities in the Guard and Reserve provide more F16 time; best of both worlds. Perception is that the Guard has a great reputation. They must be doing things we're not. The Guard and Reserve provide job stability, no PCS, and a modern weapon system.

## Working Conditions

### Squadron Officer School

(From the captains' perspectives)

- 12-hour days and too many additional duties.

--Wants to be the best fighter pilot, doesn't want to be the best donut seller--additional duties detract from other learning experiences.

--What's said and what's done are two separate things. For example, "Take off when you can, but get the job done!"

--The job tends to be civilianized. If you're not flying you're not in your flight suit. Gives you a poor impression of being in the military.

--"I'm tired of long days."

--B-1 copilots are "copilots forever."

#### Air Command and Staff College

(From the majors' perspectives)

--New pilots thrown into grind (12-16-hour work days).

--Instructors are young and not experienced in weapon systems. Most are inexperienced and can't provide motivation.

--Constant pressure on the job. Seems inconsistent in peacetime.

--Leave in cockpit for 20 years, don't place in unrelated staff jobs.

--Don't receive enough practice to go to war, not survivable. Now at major will not be as good as a lieutenant or captain. May look good on paper, but feel like a liability.

--Irritants: Things are getting worse with the budget, less flying time, and more simulation.

--People worry about obtaining 500 hours in the F-16 because they must then go to ATC.

--Chief pilot position is too frequently seen as a paperwork position. Not a good role model.

### Air War College

(From lieutenant colonels' and colonels' perspective)

--Bad impression to see lieutenant colonels in the squadron approaching retirement and not flying.

--Antagonized by the idea of the issuance of leather jackets for retention purposes.

--Pilots will intentionally bust check rides to not be eligible for the ATC exchange program. ATC is taking our best pilots. We must come up with a better way to rotate our pilots between weapon systems.

--Guys are not doing what they want to do--they are not flying airplanes. They're working 12-hour days and flying twice a week.

--There is a leadership problem at the wing commander and above level. Our leaders are not taking care of their people. No one cares anymore for their people.

--The makeup of the squadron has changed. No more do we have many lieutenant colonels. The younger guys breed on discontent of the other younger troops.

### Recruitment, Changing Attitudes, and Perceptions

#### Squadron Officer School

(From the captains' perspectives)

--Air Force as an occupation--not profession.

--See companies offering comparable or better health plans and retirement systems.

--Air Force compares to large corporations and the middle management level. Therefore, Air Force officers are corporate men.

--No continual traditions in the Air Force--they change about every seven years. Traditions seem to change with frequent leadership changes.

--Will stay in the Air Force as long as the Air Force has a need for me, and I feel that I am contributing.

--The Air Force gets nothing for free--they get at least seven years of patriotic service. Most people choose not to serve their country.

--People are getting out looking for more pay and less work. "Air Force people are no different than any other white collar worker."

--Many people are disillusioned from unrealistic expectations.

--Perceived lack of status because of low pay.

--Want to be pilots not officers.

#### Air Command and Staff College

(From the majors' perspectives)

--"Recruit people--retain families."

--Younger folks expect things handed to them. They expect the Air Force owes them.

--"Come in with a Wall Street Journal in one hand and a brief case in the other."

--Major difference today is no draft--everyone is a volunteer and expects big things.

--Now a materialistic society.

--Shift from national service to monetary motivation.

--Must integrate force with society. Society is giving us a different product and leadership has not adapted.

--Need to mold attitudes in commissioning programs. The basis for officership begins early.

--Now a volunteer service: More motivated to serve on day one. Demotivated after entry on active duty.

--"Me" generation.

--"I like the institution, but I am still a capitalist."

--We're not having fun anymore; differences between old guard and current crop.



--Value system; younger corps are used to having things given to them.

--Air Force should present a more paternal attitude.

--Air Force a job not a profession.

--Perception of one-mistake Air Force.

--Pilots feel they are being coddled and given "leather band-aids."

--Breach of contract: I signed a contract, but the Air Force is not living up to their end. Biggest demotivation is decreases in benefits.

--One retention problem is the inflated expectations of our people. They need honest counseling. We're all competitive people, but we want to know the truth about our performance.

--We no longer have job security in the Air Force.

--The Air Force is a "calling."

--Integrity is a central issue.

--It's a position-by-attrition Air Force.

#### Air War College

(From lieutenant colonels' and colonels' perspectives)

--When frustration level is high, more people will elect to separate.

--Young pilots won't do just anything for the pride of wearing a blue suit. They only want to fly with no other responsibilities.

--Does patriotism really matter today? The answer is no.

--Nothing is wrong with a pilot who serves six good years--he has served his country well.

--Most young pilots were raised in fairly affluent families and don't expect to change their lifestyle for the Air Force.

--High expectations--Air Force must convince the pilot to stay. The average pilot does not come in the Air Force with a career in mind and looks for reasons to stay in.

--There is a perception that our security is being chipped away: SERB, pay raises, and retirement benefits.

--Younger folks need to be told that this is the way the Air Force is, and this is what it's about.

--Overall problem over the last ten years is the lifestyle. There is now a need for more stability, opportunities for the working spouse, and there are always openings in the airlines.

--The criticism is relative to the leadership and quality of life.

--Retention problems have not changed when compared to other low points of the past.

--People who come in the Air Force today have the same professional attitude. On balance most are good people. However, we don't cultivate officership.

--There is one basic difference: Expectations are greater.

--The new generation has different interests. They have nothing to focus on--no Vietnam.

--The young second lieutenant looks down the road and sees how colonels are treated and they are not sure they want that type of life--living on base, can't sell off-base house, are broke because they have college-age kids, and are in nonflying jobs.

--The values are different; driven more to job than profession.

--We must help the young pilot during the transition period. We do not want to penalize an individual for seven years of dedicated service.

--The young pilot must understand that his career will not be all roses. Can you balance the good times with the bad times?

## APPENDIX C

### SPOUSAL AND FAMILY ISSUES

The following comments were received during nine interview sessions with 100 students from Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College. All personnel interviewed were rated officers. All Air War College students were former flying squadron commanders. The comments approximate actual interview responses during an open forum concerning the expanding role of the squadron commander. During each session, the students were asked to comment on the squadron commander selection process and performance, the number one retention issues, voice their opinions on spousal and family issues, and express their view of the Officer Professional Development program.

The following comments concern spousal and family issues.

#### Squadron Officer School

(From the captains' perspectives)

--If the Air Force is not concerned about my family, they are not concerned about me. I have a career wife and kids in school. The assignment system does not take this into account.

--My wife never joined the Air Force. Good to see emphasis away from what wives are expected to do for the Air Force.

--Extensive TDY causes undue stress on the family.

--"My spouse gets better benefits from her job than I do from mine."

--More spouses with careers. Frequently the spouse's career takes the priority in the family.

### Air Command and Staff College

(From the majors' perspectives)

--Equity issue: No way to communicate that you have a working spouse. Should one pilot get the bad job because the other pilot had a working spouse?

--Medical care is on the decline. Can't get an appointment at the clinic and difficult to get a CHAMPUS referral.

--After 20 years, how much do you owe your country? Your family? Pay back not that great.

--Spouse gives up job security; a great sacrifice when you count on her money for the education of your children.

--Read Air Force Times about declining benefits and changing policies and say out in six more years (20 years of service).

--Perception that the Air Force gets two for the price of one when it comes to the squadron commander's spouse. Not so sure there is a concerted effort to change policies. The squadron still has emotional needs that must be dealt with.

--No one believes new Air Force policy on spouses. It's a big interest item.

--Air Force should help in the employment of spouses.

--Reservists appreciate the spouse support groups in the Air Force.

### Air War College

(From lieutenant colonels' and colonels' perspectives)

--One of the problems is the airlines, but the other is definitely stability. Today's pilots are more centered around the family.

--The spouse has a lot more to say about the management of the family. The concerns include spouse employment, kids in school, and buying a home.

--The Air Force leadership talks out of both sides of its mouth. The new spousal program is a white wash.

--Wives need to work to support future expenses such as college for their kids.

--It is still a two-for-one contract. The pressure is still there to volunteer.

--It is nice to have a policy on the books; implementation is the problem.

--The new spousal issues can be compared to the Civil Rights legislation. It will take time and understanding.

--The commander cannot take the place of all the volunteer programs, but is still held responsible.

--Wives are now burned out with wing social obligations. The new regulations will never be accepted by the old guard.

--Squadron commanders' workshops include the wives. This policy appears inconsistent. However, I like it.

--The perception is that the young wife must play the same game as the older wife.

--The wing commander still controls the promotions--wife's participation may help.

--No one to pick up the slack. Responsibility still falls on the wing commander's wife.

--The modern woman is quite different. More wives have degrees and career aspirations.

--The problem is not closed. The perception exists that there will be no volunteers for the OWC, thrift shop, etc. What then?

--We've lived under the two-for-one issue for years. Infrastructure and mindset will not change overnight. You'll see the pendulum swing both ways before the problem is resolved.

--There is an overreaction. More spouses are working and going to school rather than volunteering today.

## APPENDIX D

### OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND PERSONNEL ISSUES

The following comments were received during nine interview sessions with 100 students from Squadron Officer School, Air Command and Staff College, and Air War College. All personnel interviewed were rated officers. All Air War College students were previous flying squadron commanders. The comments approximate actual interview responses during an open forum concerning the expanding role of the squadron commander. During each session, the students were asked to comment on the squadron commander selection process and performance, the number one retention issue, voice their opinions on spousal and family issues, and express their view of the Officer Professional Development program.

The following comments concern the Officer Professional Development and personnel issues:

#### Squadron Officer School

(From the captains' perspectives)

- See deletion of ASTRA as good move.
- Air Force is attempting to change, but slow.
- Like the new OES, the right guys will get promoted.
- Not confident of next assignment, many unknowns.
- Must accept not flying.
- Assignment officers at MPC not concerned about desires.

--No flexibility in assignment system, not willing to look at alternatives to meet needs of the Air Force and the individual.

--My assignment officers at MPC and at the MAJCOM can't answer the question of, "Why an individual got a certain assignment?" Need straight story.

--Don't like a tour first in TAC, then ATC, and follow-on to ALO tour. You don't get enough experience in weapons system.

--Disdain the thought of a staff tour.

--Don't extend flying commitment. If you could guarantee flying for full commitment, the problem would ease.

--Volunteerism doesn't matter; allocation process is the problem. Need to publish hard-to-fill assignments and maybe you will get the volunteers.

--Do I wait around to see if the new initiatives work or do I get out now?

--Once you apply for a DOS, you are punished. Most pilots are taken off of flying and training missions. System encourages telling your plans to separate at the last minute.

--Payback is to get the guaranteed job. Future assignment is the key, not the bonus.

--Realize that ALO tour is paying the dues. Everyone who has gone before me has also paid the dues.

--See people coming out of FAIP assignments and going to tankers. As a result, they separate. MPC says, "You'll take what you get."

--Need an official newsletter. Should get information quicker and easier through official channels; not through the Air Force Times.

#### Air Command and Staff College

(From the majors' perspectives)

--OES system is good; OER focused on too many things.

--OPD designed to improve personnel system.

--New OES is accurate and honest; may solve the inflation problem.

--Understand MPC must fill remote and ATC requirements--a reasonable man does not have a problem.

--Only lack of gate time talks to get back into the cockpit.

--If you fly, you won't progress.

--Word is getting out, but is labeled as "BS."

--Issues are losing ground to actions.

--Problem lies with Congressional support.

--Remote is a fact of life for TAF.

--MPC should have a grand design for PME students since they are supposedly in the top 20%. The jobs should be better massaged.

--Get the feeling from my assignment officer to put up or shut up with the assignment.

--Suggest published list of those assignments which officers have elected to 7-Day Opt--maybe MPC would get more volunteers.

--Don't trust carpetbaggers at MPC--always worked own job.

--MPC geared to common guy; no common guy in school.

--Need to know follow-on and make it happen, especially after a remote. Too many bad deals after a remote.

--After receiving bonus to 14 years no incentive to stay in.

--Delayed promotion boards and long waits to pin-on result in separation or retirement.

--Lieutenant colonel with two year wait to pin-on and three year commitment to retire is too long to wait.

--There is perceived unfairness in the assignment business.

--OPD seems to be "on track" towards solving some problems.



### Air War College

(From lieutenant colonels' and colonels' perspectives)

--You can't get promoted just by flying airplanes.

--The new OES will turn into a politically gamed system. The outcome can only be determined by the wing commanders.

--OPD is a top-down issue. It will take time and will be a self-perpetuating system.

--There will be a need to see how the promotion board treats the new OES. Will there be a trade-off between the record and the promotion recommendation?

--"Definitely Promote" is the same as the old "1."

--The wing commander has too much power under the new OES.

--Top leadership must convince the young force that the assignment system is fair.

--We probably give our young people too much info. In the past, most young pilots did not know who the Chief of Staff of the Air Force was and did not care about their next assignment.

--We need to extend the first tour for our new pilots to about the five- or six-year point. Keep them in their weapons system to ensure proficiency. It is really bad to jerk someone out of an F-16 and put them in a trainer or on TAF command post duty early in a career. Wait to move the individual at about the eight- or ten-year point, if the individual wants stability.

--Air Force could greatly benefit from longer stability in all jobs.

--Do away with BPZ promotions. Young troops do not need to be thinking that far ahead.

--The new OES forces a commander to say how people stack up in the squadron. Counseling is the most important aspect of the new OES. Need to stay with this system for awhile. We did away with the "1-2-3" system at a time that it really hurt some good people. If we would have stuck to the system longer, there would have been a more equal distribution of the 1, 2, and 3s.

--OPD changes are excellent changes. The changes force people to talk to each other.

--The squadron commander should be required to do all the AF Form 90 counseling for his squadron. This would complete the process and would link performance with future potential.

APPENDIX E  
OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

PRECOMMISSIONING				
Goal: To Be The Best Lieutenant			Officership	
YEARS OF SERVICE				
Depth Development			Specialty Training	J
2LT	↓	1		O
		2		B
		3		
1LT	↓	4	OPS Flying Duty	P
		5		E
		6		R
CAPT	↓	7		F
		8		O
		9		R
	↓	10	SQD/WG	M
		11	Staff	A
		12		N
Begin Breadth Development			Air/MAJCOM/Joint Staff	C
MAJOR	↓	13		E
		14		
		15		
	↓	16		I
		17		S
		18	SQD/DO/CC	
LT COL	↓	19		K
		20		E
		21	Y	

US Department of the Air Force. Officer Professional Development. Air Force Regulation 36-23, Chapter 9, 1 January 1989, p. 40.

## APPENDIX F

### OFFICER PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: A COMPARISON

#### CAREER MANAGEMENT

#### PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

##### PHILOSOPHY

- |                                                             |                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| -Concern with future career and promotion                   | -Current duty performance is key                    |
| -Min involvement of chain of command, AFMPC makes decisions | -Chain of command greatly involved, AFMPC a partner |
| -Concern with getting ahead, square-filling                 | -Depth first then breadth, timing important         |
| -AF is job                                                  | -AF is profession                                   |

##### EDUCATION AND TRAINING

- |                                                                         |                                                                                     |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -AU Ctr for Prof Devel offers seminar                                   | -MAJCOM Lt education prog to include AU course                                      |
| -SOS: 54% eligibles attend Lt & Capt 8-1/2 weeks                        | -SOS: Goal is 100% Capt only 7 weeks in '89                                         |
| -ACSC: 10 Months 20% opportunity Eligibility tied to promotion list     | -ACSC: 24 wks (2 times yr) 30% opportunity MAJCOMs form candidate pool              |
| -AWC: Eligibility tied to promotion list                                | -AWC: MAJCOMs form candidate pool for Lt Cols                                       |
| -Advanced Academic Degrees: MA degree for promotion Volunteers for AFIT | -Advanced Academic Degrees: MA for job performance Vols & NonVols screened for AFIT |
| -Competition for ASTRA, JCS Intern, & MAJCOM Spotlight                  | -Elitist programs deleted                                                           |

##### EVALUATION

- |                                               |                                                                                |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -Potential                                    | -Current job performance                                                       |
| -Officer Evaluation Report                    | -Officer Performance Report Promotion Recommendation Performance Feedback Wkst |
| -Officer not involved                         | -Requires commander and officer interaction                                    |
| -Emphasizes depth & breadth throughout career | -Emphasizes depth first then breadth                                           |

### ASSIGNMENTS

- |                                                                                            |                                                                                                                    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -Responsibility w/AFMPC                                                                    | -Responsibility shared w/comdr, officer, AFMPC                                                                     |
| -AFR 36-23:<br>Emphasis on career management<br>Encourages volunteerism                    | -AFR 36-23:<br>Emphasis on professional development<br>You only volunteer once                                     |
| -AF Form 90:<br>Long-term career path<br>Supervisor signature                              | -AF Form 90:<br>Next assignment only<br>Counseling & feedback session, comdr comments                              |
| -Join Spouse:<br>Success measured by #s assigned together                                  | -Join Spouse:<br>Success measured by positive impact on OPD<br>Counseling required as to limitations on OPD        |
| -Deferred Lt Cols:<br>Col a successful career<br><br>Deferred Lt Cols not in key Positions | -Deferred Lt Cols:<br>Lt Col a successful career<br>Encourage assignments to Air Staff, MAJCOM, key wing positions |
| -7-Day Option:<br>Application accepted if nominated for an assignment                      | -7-Day Option:<br>Application accepted if ADSC is 12 mos or less                                                   |
| -Separation date set at NLT 1st day of 7th month                                           | -Separation date set by AFMPC between 1-12 mos                                                                     |

### FORCE STRUCTURING

- |                                                                                 |                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| -Regular appointment:<br>Boards @ 4, 5, 7 yr point<br>50% max augmentation rate | -Regular appointment:<br>Board @ 7 yr point<br>Greater than 50% based on requirements in each cat |
| -ADSC: No commitment for promotion to captain                                   | -ADSC: 1 year commitment for promotion to captain                                                 |
| -BPZ: BPZ promotion to major NET 3 years                                        | -BPZ: BPZ promotion to major is NET 2 years                                                       |
| -Officer separations: Officer completes survey                                  | -Officer separations:<br>Officer and comdr complete survey<br>Meeting with comdr required         |
| -Selective early retirement:<br>History of voluntary retirements                | -Selective early retirement: SERB met in Nov 88 in interest of force leveling                     |
| -Promotion timing: Promote by year group                                        | -Promotion timing:<br>Proposal to promote to requirements                                         |

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## GLOSSARY

ACSC: Air Command and Staff College

ADSCD: Active Duty Service Commitment Date

AFMPC: Air Force Military Personnel Center

AFSC: Armed Forces Staff College

APZ: Above-The-Promotion Zone

ATC: Air Training Command

AWC: Air War College

BPZ: Below-The-Promotion Zone

DCS: Deputy Chief of Staff

DOD: Department of Defense

DOPMA: Defense Officer Personnel Management Act

HQ AF: Headquarters Air Force

IPZ: In-The-Promotion Zone

JSO: Joint Specialty Officer

MAC: Military Airlift Command

MAJCOM: Major Command

NWC: National War College

OES: Officer Evaluation System

OPD: Officer Professional Development

OPR: Officer Performance Report

PACAF: Pacific Air Forces

PCS: Permanent Change of Station

PME: Professional Military Education

PRF: Promotion Recommendation Form  
SAC: Strategic Air Command  
SERB: Selective Early Retirement Board  
SOS: Squadron Officer School  
SSS: Senior Service School  
TAC: Tactical Air Command  
USAFE: United States Air Forces in Europe